

'Al-Nahham' still present in Gulf musical art form



Ballet dancers in Egypt find passion on isolated stage



Man Utd, Ajax squeeze into Europa final



150 Fils

TRUMP WARNS SACKED FBI CHIEF OVER MEDIA LEAKS

FURIOUS US PRESIDENT LASHES OUT ON TWITTER



Min 27°
Max 43°



WASHINGTON: Demonstrators, including mothers with the organization Moms Rising, march during a protest as they attempt to deliver miniature Statue of Liberty figures to government officials in support of diversity and immigrant rights outside the Trump International Hotel yesterday. — AFP

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump warned his sacked FBI director not to talk to the press yesterday, in a morning Twitter tirade that painted a picture of a president under siege and lashing out. Capping a week in which Trump faced a slew of criticism for firing the man investigating his campaign's possible ties to Russia, Trump warned James Comey there could be retribution if he speaks to the press about their private conversations. "James Comey better hope that there are no 'tapes' of our conversations before he starts leaking to the press!" Trump said.

Furious with the news coverage of the White House's shifting explanations on Comey's sacking, Trump lashed out, suggesting the media was wrong to expect his spokespeople to be 100 percent accurate. "As a very active President with lots of things happening, it is not possible for my surrogates to stand at podium with perfect accuracy!" he tweeted.

Trump then went on to suggest scrapping the traditional White House briefings that have existed in some form since the Woodrow Wilson administration almost a century ago. "Maybe the best thing to do would be to cancel all future 'press briefings' and hand out written responses for the sake of accuracy???" Trump suggested. Again, Trump brought the issue back to Russia, referencing a former head of intelligence's assertion that Trump was, to his knowledge, not colluding with Moscow. "When James Clapper himself, and virtually everyone else with knowledge of the witch hunt, says there is no collusion, when does it end?" Trump tweeted.



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

Follow

James Comey better hope that there are no "tapes" of our conversations before he starts leaking to the press!

RETWEETS
5,910

LIKES
15,407



US President Donald Trump warns his fired FBI director James Comey in this tweet yesterday. — AP

Trump's bare-knuckle comments immediately fueled fresh comparisons between his administration and that of disgraced president Richard Nixon, who famously recorded his conversations - a fact that sped his downfall during the Watergate scandal. "Presidents are supposed to have stopped routinely taping visitors without their knowledge when Nixon's taping system was revealed in 1973," tweeted the presidential historian Michael Beschloss.

The White House initially asserted that Comey's dismissal had nothing to do with the Russian investigations, which continue to be an albatross around the neck of Trump's presidency. Instead, they said, the president fired Comey on the advice of senior members of the Justice Department, who worried about his handling of a 2016 investigation into Trump's election rival Hillary Clinton. But Trump shattered that explanation himself on Thursday when he said he had always intended to fire Comey and that his decision was linked to the ongoing investigation into his campaign's ties with Russia. In an interview with NBC on Thursday, Trump also revealed that he had asked Comey on three occasions whether he was personally under investigation. "I actually asked him, yes. I said, 'If it's possible would you let me know, am I under investigation?'" He said, "You are not under investigation," Trump recounted, repeating an assertion made when the White House announced Comey's firing Tuesday. — AFP

EU, US TO HOLD TALKS ON AIRLINE LAPTOP BAN

BRUSSELS: The EU and the United States will hold talks next week on a possible US airline ban on carry-on computers amid concerns it could cause massive disruption as the hectic summer travel season gets underway.

The US Department of Homeland Security sparked deep concern in Europe on Tuesday when it said was close to a decision on extending to European airlines an existing ban on eight mostly Muslim countries.

A European Commission spokeswoman said a telephone call between top EU officials and their US peers had provided "a very constructive exchange of views". "No ban on electronic devices or any other decision has been announced," she said. The EU officials - Home Affairs Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos and Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc - recalled the bloc's longstanding cooperation with Washington on airline security.

At the same time, Bulc "highlighted the potential safety implications of putting a large number of electronic devices in the aircraft hold," the spokeswoman said. "The EU invited the US to come to Brussels next week for talks at political and expert level ... to jointly assess the potential risks and review future measures," she added. No date was announced. — AFP



CASABLANCA: In this file photo dated March 29, 2017, airport staff speak to passengers at the check-in area at Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport. — AP



KUWAIT: In this May 13, 2008 file photo, citizens carry the late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah to his final resting place. — KUNA photos



Funeral of late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT MARKS 9TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHEIKH SAAD AL-ABDULLAH'S DEATH

KUWAIT: Kuwait marks today the ninth anniversary of the death of the late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah who passed away on May 13, 2008, leaving behind a legacy that is still alive in the hearts of the Kuwaiti people. Sheikh Saad was the 14th Amir of Kuwait and the fourth Amir of the country after its independence in 1961, he was Crown Prince during the reign of the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (1978-2006).

He served as deputy director of the police department between 1954 and 1959 before being nominated as the first Minister of Interior on January 17, 1962 in the first Cabinet following the adoption of the Constitution.

The Father Amir was named as Defense Minister in 1964 while retaining his post as Minister of Interior; he served as Prime Minister between February 16, 1978 and July 13, 2003, leading 10 consecutive governments.

Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah contributed to the making of key legislations and laws relating to housing welfare, promotion of the national workforce, the economic and urban development, as well as the social, cultural and scientific affairs. He adopted honorable stances that affirmed the country's independence and won him great popularity since 1961 when then Iraqi leader Abdulkarim Qassim issued threats for Kuwait.

As head of the executive authority at that time, he lobbied public support for the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem in the face of the Iraqi threats. When late Amir Jaber Al-Ahmad took office on February 8, 1978, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah was



The Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, who left a legacy in the hearts of his people.



The late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah

named as Prime Minister ten days before being named as Crown Prince. Sheikh Saad was deservedly called 'hero of liberation' due to his prominent role in the Kuwait liberation war against the Iraqi invasion in 1991. Besides lobbying for the liberation of the country on the regional and international levels, he took charge of coordinating the public resistance against the invaders through daily contacts with the field leaders and ensuring the logistic, material and moral support to them.

Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah was the first advocate for the popular congress held under his leadership in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on October 13-15, 1990, to coordinate the resistance against the invasion. The congress, themed 'liberation - our slogan, means and end,' gathered 1,200 public figures and a number of foreign friends of Kuwait. The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad and Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah addressed the gathering. Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah was named as acting ruler during the martial rule declared in the country during the liberation war until the autumn of 1991.

He continued his efforts to prepare the ground for the return of the displaced Kuwaitis to their homes after the large-scale post-war mine-erasing operation. He personally supervised the efforts to resume the public utilities, the food rations, the reconstruction and the rehabilitation processes, as well as the seven-month battle against the fires at 732 oil wells, which were set ablaze by the Iraqi troops before pulling out from Kuwait. His government in the post-war era focused also on restoration of the parliamentary life through setting the stage for legislative elections.

Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah spared no effort to secure the

release of the Kuwaiti prisoners of war and missing in action and scaled lobbying for regional and international pressures on the Iraqi regime to solve this humanitarian issue. On this day the children of Kuwait remember this great leader who dedicated his life for serving the homeland and left countless heroic actions. — KUNA



Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah's funeral procession.



The late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah laid to rest.

KUWAIT, CHINA SHARE ENTHUSIASM ON 'BELT AND ROAD' ECONOMIC INITIATIVE

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait and China expressed optimism that the 'Belt and Road' initiative, announced in 2013, will help develop global economic growth. Speaking on the subject, Kuwaiti and Chinese diplomats both affirmed that the initiative would result in the revival of many businesses especially within the central Asia region.

Kuwait's Ambassador to China Sameeh Johar Hayat said that partaking in the initiative 'the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road' was within the interests of his country, noting that the plan fell within Kuwait's 2035 vision for development.

Kuwait's vision and the Chinese initiative share many aspects, said the diplomat who affirmed that the global economy would benefit from the success of both plans. He indicated that Kuwait was amongst the first Arab nations to have signed the Belt and Road initiative.

Ambassador Hayat said that his country would be partaking in the May 14-15 interna-



Kuwait's Ambassador to China Sameeh Johar Hayat

tional media cooperation forum dedicated to the initiative and revealed that over 80 countries will participate in the event.

Kuwait's Ambassador took the chance to laud the Kuwaiti-Chinese relations and



Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Wang Di

affirmed that his country will do its best to help Beijing's initiative to be a success. Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Wang Di said that the Belt and Road initiative will not only benefit China, it will have a greater impact on

the Asian region and the world. Di lauded Kuwait for being amongst the first countries to sign the initiative. He reiterated the fact that the plan will benefit both China and Kuwait immensely, adding that the Belt and Road initiative will help achieve mutual further economic progress. On the upcoming forum, Ambassador Di revealed that the event would help attract some 1,200 participants from several world countries, international organizations, and business groups.

By naming Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the head of the Kuwaiti delegation to the forum, the GCC country displayed a great interest in the success of the event and the initiative, said the Ambassador.


Ambassador Di hoped that the forum would achieve its goals in bolstering economic and commercial cooperation amongst countries in Asia and expressed confidence that the global economy will benefit from the plan. — KUNA



IRBIL: A picture taken during the construction of the 'Kuwait Ward' at Irbil's Emergency Hospital. — KUNA

KUWAIT FINANCES WARD IN IRBIL'S EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

IRBIL: Kuwait has financed a ward in an emergency hospital in Iraqi Kurdistan, the country's Consulate General in Irbil said yesterday. The 'Kuwait Ward' at Irbil's Emergency Hospital will be opened over the coming few days to offer medical treatment to as many as possible of the casualties of the war in Mosul, Consul General Dr Omar Al-Kandari said. As part of keenness on promoting the health sector and offer medical aid to the Iraqi people, the State of Kuwait financed the ward providing it with all necessary supplies, to will lessen pressure on other hospitals in the city, Kandari added. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health responded to a request from the Iraqi Kurdistan government and financed the ward, amid the lack of emergency sections in the city's hospitals, Kandari noted. Kuwait is adopting an ambitious plan to offer the displaced Iraqis in all fields, especially in the health sector, he said. —KUNA



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Crime

Report

Motorist dead in King Fahd Road collision

KUWAIT: A truck driver caused the death of a citizen after he collided with his vehicle. The trucker escaped, leaving the truck's title behind, which detectives used to look for him. Police received calls from motorists on King Fahd Road near Mina Abdullah about an accident, so police went to the scene and discovered that a 22-year-old citizen had died. Detectives are working on identifying the truck driver for questioning.

Assault

An ex-convict used the help of his wife to get a police officer in trouble for sexual harassment when the officer attempted to arrest him. The woman recorded the incident with her phone and enabled her husband to escape. He is being sought in a beating case and an attempt to run over a police officer. The incident began when a young man told police someone used a Taser on him, then made him sign blank papers, and gave them the suspect's address. Police and detectives went to the location and saw the suspect in his car, so they went to him and identified themselves. He responded with insults and started to move his car while filming them with his mobile, then attempted to run over a detective, but he was able to grab him and attempted to pull him out. The suspect called his wife for help, then Tased the officer in his abdomen. The wife responded to her husband's request, who told her to grab the officer so it becomes a harassment case, while the video clip she recorded showed her defending her husband valiantly and was able to help him escape. Police are looking for him.

Blackmail

A woman told police her boyfriend had sex with her with her consent, but she ended up being jailed for blackmail and making a malicious claim. The woman entered the police station in a very bad shape and claimed her boyfriend had consensual sex with her. Police called the man, who said he has a relationship with her, but he got his phone out and showed them text messages from her in which she threatened that "if you stop paying my monthly allowance, I will reveal that you had sex with me". He also had audio recordings in which she said she will get money by making false claims. The man said he was paying her to protect his reputation, but when she became a burden, he stopped responding to her. The woman admitted she was lying and asked her boyfriend to forgive her, but the man insisted on lodging a complaint and she was held at the police station.

Smuggling

An Asian man failed in his attempt to smuggle one kilogram of heroin in a postal parcel and was sent to the Drugs Control General Department. The Asian attempted to smuggle in raw heroin in a water cooler that was delivered by courier. An interior ministry statement said police coordinated with customs officers, and when the Asian came to receive the parcel, he was arrested and the heroin was removed from the cooler. He said he brings drugs into the country and sells it to addicts.

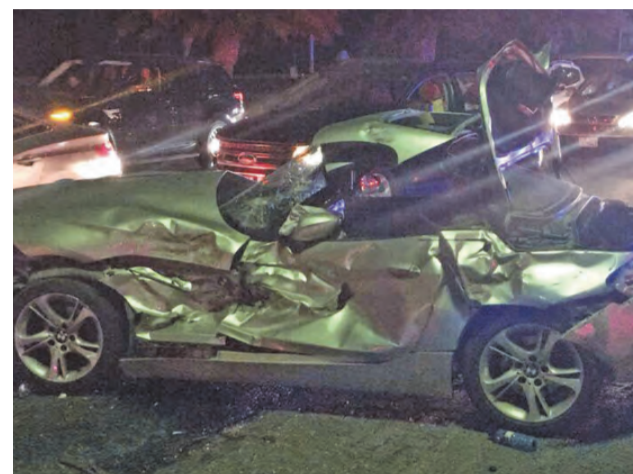
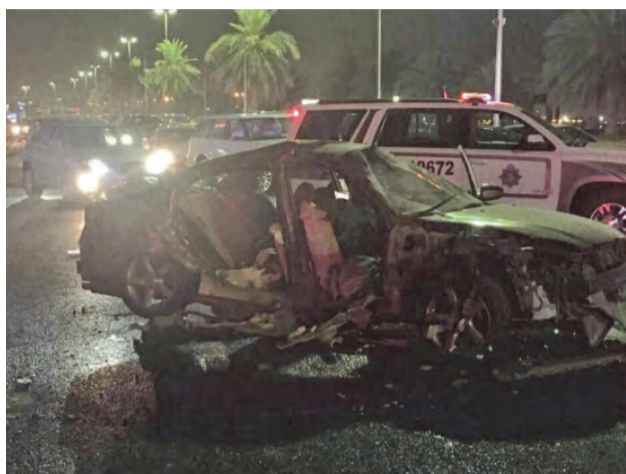
Fugitive

Jahra police stopped a car that did not have license plates in Waha, and when they asked the motorist about the plates, he said traffic officers took them. Police checked on him and he was found wanted to serve a jail sentence of a year-and-a-half for impersonating a policeman. Police searched the car and found the plates and title in the trunk. It was also found that he rented the car and did not return it on time. He was arrested and will be referred to concerned authorities.

Guilty

A drunk man who hit an Indian man's car and wounded him, and also took his mobile phone, returned the next day and gave the Indian his phone back. The accident took place in Taima, and the man went to his sponsor and told her what happened. She took him to the police station and lodged a complaint, and detectives began working on the case. The suspect later felt guilty about what happened, so he called the latest incoming call number, which was that of the Indian's sponsor. — Al-Rai

THREE KILLED, FIVE INJURED IN GULF ROAD ACCIDENT



KUWAIT: One of the cars involved in a fatal crash reported at the Arabian Gulf Road Thursday evening. Another vehicle involved in the accident.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A deadly four-way car accident took place Thursday evening on the Arabian Gulf Road near the National Assembly, resulting in the death of three persons while five were injured; all members of the same family. Capital fire center and paramedics dealt with the accident.

No injuries in fire

Fire broke out in the basement of an eight-storey building in Farwaniya, and residents had to be evacuated due to thick smoke. Farwaniya and Ardhiya fire centers responded and discovered the basement was used as a carpentry shop and contained wood, foam and paint; materials that are highly inflammable and caused the smoke to spread quickly. People trapped in the elevator were freed and the fire was controlled. No injuries were reported.

Shooting team returns

The Kuwait police shooting team

returned from Lebanon after participating in the Arab police pistol shooting championship. The team's results were as follows: In the individual women's 25m pistol, Sergeant Jazi Alzamil won second place, while in the men's category,

Captain Abdullah Al-Kandari won third place. In the women's team category, Kuwait won second place. In the teams' tactical firing category, Kuwait won second place, while the women won third place in the same contest.



A firefighter tackles a blaze in the basement of an eight-storey building in Farwaniya.

NEW AIR AMBULANCE CENTER CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT IN HEALTH SECTOR: MINISTER

KUWAIT: A center for air ambulance service launched on Thursday will prop up the country's healthcare sector, Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said on Thursday. The minister made the remarks in a ceremony to inaugurate the center located in Al-Sabah Medical Area. He added that the ministry would leave no stone unturned to ameliorate health care services.

Moreover, he spoke of the ministry's plans to curb road fatalities, and pointed out that the opening of the new air ambulance center coincides with the United Nations (UN) Road Safety Week, which runs from May 8-14.

On the new edifice, Harbi noted that it stretches on 14,000 square meters at a cost of KD 4.750 million, adding that the air ambulance staff have been trained to deal with critical cases and emergencies.

Meanwhile, Director of the ministry's Emergency Department Dr Tariq Al-Jassar said that the ministry is studying plans to further expand its fleet of air

ambulance aircrafts. Speaking on future projects, he revealed that the ministry is also planning to open two additional

centers for air ambulance service to encompass the northern and southern areas of country. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Health Ministry officials inspect a helicopter that is part of a new air ambulance service center inaugurated this past Thursday in Al-Sabah Medical Area. — Photo by Joseph Shagra



‘AL-NAHHAM’ PROFESSION STILL PRESENT IN MUSICAL ART FORM

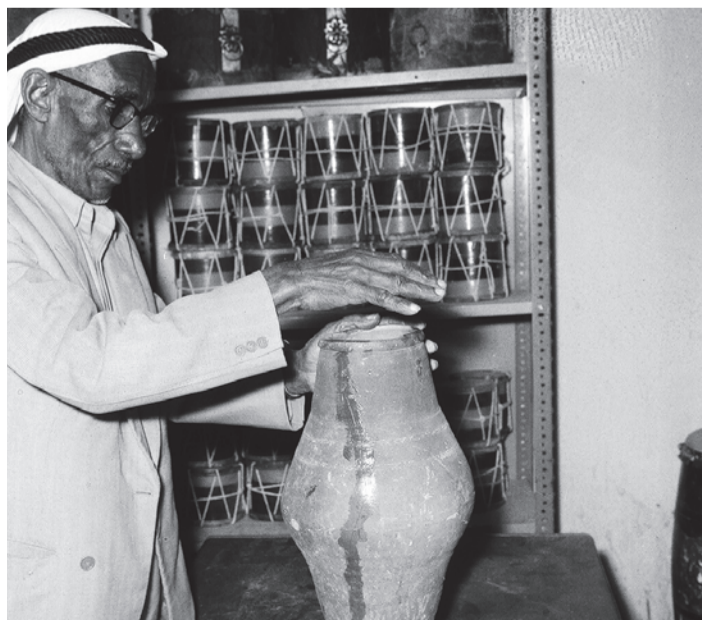
KUWAIT: Battling the harsh marine environment in addition to physical and mental strains, pearl divers and sailors of old got motivated by certain individuals with the job title of ‘Al-Nahham’ who were tasked with singing, entertaining, and motivating people during long sea voyages.

Though Al-Nahham, as a profession, was long gone, people still maintain memory of it through contests held all over in the Gulf region. Speaking on the issue, musical researcher and artists Fathi Al-Sager said that the ‘Al-Nahma’ genre was created to celebrate and preserve the work used to be carried out by Al-Nahhams in the olden days.

Despite the slight differences, Al-Nahma art is almost identical in Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, the UAE, and the some parts of the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia, said Al-Sager who noted that Kuwaitis infused clapping into this art and also their performances were a tad faster than counterparts in other

GCC nations. Of course, Al-Nahma - as a musical art - was also influenced by what sailors in the old days got to experience during their travels. Providing this point of view, researcher and sea captain Ali Saleh Al-Roumi said that several styles and sub-genres of Al-Nahma were developed as sailors got exposed to different cultures beyond the Gulf region. On the regional level, he added that though Al-Nahma was performed in a similar manner, each Gulf state had a provided a bit of their own taste to the music and singing; however, the overall style was still the same.

Although, pearl diving and sailing on wooden boats are still practiced during ceremonial events held in Kuwait and other GCC countries at certain seasons, Al-Nahma performances could be found on any given day of the year, which in turn preserves and maintain the voice of Al-Nahhams beyond the boundaries of time and space. — KUNA



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Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A child celebrating her love to Kuwait. — KUNA

EQUATE SUPPORTS GPCA SUPPLY CHAIN CONFERENCE

HIGHLIGHTING INNOVATION AND EFFICIENCY IN THE CHANGING GLOBAL NEEDS

KUWAIT: EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, sponsored the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) Supply Chain Conference for the ninth year in-a-row as part of the company's commitment to create a platform of knowledge exchange with manufacturing bodies, service providers, academic institutions and other stakeholders to address global challenges.

During the conference, EQUATE's Board Chairperson Hosnia Hashim and the President and CEO Mohammad Husain discussed the significance of innovation, technology and organizational structures in driving efficiency and sustainability in the petrochemical industry to address global supply chain developments and trends.

During the welcome address at the opening of the Conference, Husain said, "Today's petrochemical market is volatile, complex and uncertain. Overall collaboration, sustainability, technology and new skill sets are the factors that will influence the way for conducting business in future. Among these, collaboration is the key for the GCC supply chain to stay competitive and organizations need to explore the possibility of collaborating in each and every area for business, such as strategic,

operational, technical and outsourcing of services. Hand in hand, a three-way force consisting of government, manufacturers and service providers needs to be developed and secured to ensure that the total supply chain is ready for the future."

Husain added, "Whereas technology is concerned, the new operating model should

include artificial intelligence which is emerging as the next big technology and the automation of workforce will include employment of robots and adding services of drones and self-driving vehicles within a context of Internet of Things (IoT)." Husain stressed that these dramatic impacts on business will not reduce the importance of developing new skill sets for the

new era of supply chain management. Meanwhile, Hashim spoke about the role of the supply chain's organizational structure in driving efficiencies with a key focus on interfaces and links with other functions, such as procurement, information technology and others. The Company also supports knowledge sharing through the partnership with academic and research institutions such as Kuwait University (KU), aiming for progress, innovation, sustainability and training of future professionals who will positively lead the industry. As part of the partnership, a student at the KU College of Petroleum and Engineering and a professor were invited to attend the conference for the opportunity to network with various delegates.

Last year, EQUATE launched a partnership for innovation with KU, which included an Innovation Multiple Intelligence Survey led by Dr Intesar Al-Mudahka, Assistant Professor at KU's College of Sciences, measuring and assessing EQUATE's innovation efforts. The EQUATE Innovation Program aims to further collaborate with KU through the Company's Innovation Centers. Earlier in 2017, EQUATE and KU signed a comprehensive MoU for collaboration in innovation, its applications and other fields.



International

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2017

Iran and Saudi Arabia vie for influence in Senegal

9

American Muslim schools reaching out to neighbors

11

India turns on Rohingyas, seeking their deportation

14



TABQA, Syria: Commanders of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), made up of an alliance of Arab and Kurdish fighters, speak during a press conference in this Syrian town yesterday as they advance in their battle for the Islamic State's (IS) stronghold in nearby Raqqa. — AFP

FORCES PREPARE FOR PUSH ON RAQQA

US-BACKED FIGHTERS AWAIT WEAPONS FOR SUMMER ASSAULT

TABQA, Syria: US-backed fighters said yesterday they were preparing for a final assault on the Islamic State group's Syrian bastion Raqqa, likely next month, with new weapons and armored vehicles promised by Washington. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) earlier this week captured the city of Tabqa and an adjacent dam, a major prize in the offensive for Raqqa, the Syrian heart of IS's self-proclaimed "caliphate".

"The attack on Raqqa will take place in the beginning of the summer," SDF commander Rojda Felat told AFP in Tabqa, which lies on the banks of the Euphrates River about 55 km west of Raqqa. She later specified that it would probably start in June based on "military and tactical considerations". SDF commanders announced the looming assault at a news conference in Tabqa, which the alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters captured from IS on Wednesday along with the nearby dam in one of their most important victories yet.

Yesterday, an AFP team entered Tabqa and the adjacent dam - Syria's largest - and saw rows of sandbags, mangled cars and craters from heavy bombardment dotting the structure. The battle for Tabqa was marked by

fears that the dam would be severely damaged and collapse, leading to massive flooding downstream. The body of an alleged IS fighter was seen yesterday floating in the reservoir created by the dam.

US arms arriving 'soon'

The SDF fight for Raqqa - dubbed Operation Wrath of the Euphrates - has already seen the alliance capture large swathes of the surrounding province with help from the US-led coalition bombing IS in Iraq and Syria. The SDF is working to tighten the noose around Raqqa before a final assault. At their closest point, the US-backed forces are just eight kilometres from the city. They are backed by coalition air strikes, American special forces advisers and even a US Marines artillery battery.

SDF deputy head Qahraman Hassan said: "In the beginning of the summer, we will storm and liberate (Raqqa) city." His forces would receive "special weapons and armoured vehicles" to enter the city, Hassan said, after President Donald Trump changed US policy to allow arms deliveries to the SDF's Kurdish component. No newly authorized aid

had been delivered yet, Hassan said, but he added that "I believe this support will arrive soon." A US defense official told AFP earlier this week that the equipment would include small arms, ammunition, machineguns, armored vehicles and bulldozers.

'Prepare to fight'

Inside Tabqa, AFP's correspondent saw destroyed shops in the main marketplace, where jihadists had scrawled many of their slogans. Signs sticking from a street post read "Know that paradise is achieved through combat," and "Prepare to fight with all your strength". Tabqa residents began returning to their homes yesterday, but Shahhour Zuair, 46, told AFP the situation remained difficult. As the fight around Tabqa intensified around two months ago, he fled with his six children and elderly parents. He made his way back two days ago when he heard the SDF had recaptured the city.

"The civilians are coming back but there is a lack of water, electricity, bread and food," he said, sitting in front of a pile of sandbags. Mutia, 41, told AFP she was glad to be back in Tabqa after fleeing during the ferocious offen-

sive. "The fighting was really tough - there was artillery, warplanes, snipers... We wouldn't even know where the shelling was coming from," the mother of five said. "We really wanted to be done with (IS). We hated them, but we're afraid they'll come back to Tabqa," she added.

The SDF is dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), seen by the US as an indispensable ally in the fight against IS but considered a "terrorist group" by Turkey. The US change in policy has reignited a dispute with Ankara, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan calling for an "immediate" reversal. More than 320,000 people have been killed and millions more displaced since the conflict in Syria broke out in March 2011.

It began with protests against Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad but has since widened into a multi-front conflict that has drawn in world powers. Yesterday, more than 1,200 people were bused out of rebel-controlled districts of Damascus as part of a settlement bringing Syria's government closer to controlling the whole capital. The evacuees, both opposition fighters and civilians, left the districts of Barzeh and Tishrin. — AFP

PESSIMISM RIFE IN TEHRAN AHEAD OF POLL

TEHRAN: In a working-class district of Tehran teeming with porters, motorbikes and pickup trucks, residents have little enthusiasm about next week's presidential election. Iranians have tried it all - reformists, establishment figures, rabble-rousing populists, and for the past four years a moderate cleric, President Hassan Rouhani, who struck a historic deal to reintegrate Iran into the world. But residents of Molavi, in capital's south, say their lives have seen little improvement.

Once a major commercial center, the district's shops today are shabby and streaked with the soot of a million exhausts. "I don't see anything special happening in the future, no matter who becomes president," said 35-year-old clothing salesman Babak Kiani. "I may vote, but I know it doesn't change anything." Molavi sits near the end of a major north-south artery that cuts through the middle of the capital - far from the chic new coffee shops and flashy malls of north Tehran.

Officials fear that voters in poorer areas like this will shun the May 19 election, dealing a blow to the regime's legitimacy. Residents say they feel ignored by the six candidates approved by the conservative-dominated Guardian Council to stand in next Friday's election. "No one talks about us," said Mohsen, who works in wholesale at the local bazaar and only gave his first name. In televised presidential debates, "nobody talks about a young man who is 30 but can't start a family because he has no money," he said. Rouhani's government has put an end to hyperinflation and negotiated the lifting of many economic sanctions over Iran's nuclear program. But Mohsen said he had faced a tough four years.

'Our cheques keep bouncing'

"We don't buy or sell anything," he said. "Our cheques keep bouncing." He said social restrictions and heavy-handed police seem as prevalent as they were before, despite Rouhani's promises



TEHRAN: Iranians shop on a commercial street in southern Tehran's Molavi neighborhood on Thursday. — AFP

to free up society. Mohsen criticized a recent ban on concerts and cafes in the holy city of Mashhad. He said his car had been impounded for a month because he turned up the volume of his stereo after his football team won a big match.

Some residents still have fond memories of Rouhani's predecessor, Mahmud Ahmadinejad - despite his controversial statements that escalated tensions between Iran and Western powers. — AFP

RIFTS GROW ON BOTH SIDES OF YEMEN CONFLICT

DUBAI: Rifts are growing within the ranks both of Yemen's government and the rebel alliance, further dimming the prospects of an end to the country's two-year-old war. On the government side, a push for self-rule in the formerly independent south is gaining traction. Local governors in south Yemen on Thursday announced they had launched an autonomous authority for the region, a rebuttal against President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's decision to fire two key members of his government.

In the north, a power struggle is emerging in the alliance between Yemen's Shiite Houthi rebels and the forces of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh. Caught in the middle are millions of Yemenis who face spiralling violence, looming famine and a political crisis that analysts say is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

Southern discontent

On April 27, Hadi dismissed cabinet minister Hani bin Breik and Aidarous Al-Zoubeidi, then the governor of the southern province of Aden where Hadi's government is based. The move sparked mass protests in support of Zoubeidi and Breik, both historically in favor of southern autonomy. Zoubeidi and Breik are both board members of the newly-announced Southern Transitional Council. The two also played a key role in restoring security to Aden and adjacent provinces in 2015, after Houthi insurgents were driven out of the area by government forces supported by Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies.

Insiders say the recent events have deep roots. South Yemen was an independent state until 1990, when it was unified with North Yemen and Ali Abdullah Saleh elected president. Saleh remained in power until 2012, when he resigned after a year of mass protests and was succeeded by Hadi, his vice president. The ex-president realigned himself at the side of the Shiite insurgents, who staged a coup against Hadi in 2014.

Hadi fled the capital Sanaa and briefly relocated to his hometown of Aden before settling in Saudi Arabia, which along with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a crucial military ally of Hadi's government. But Hadi's dismissal of Zoubeidi and bin Breik, both reportedly close to the UAE, appears to have reignited southern separatist sentiment. "The extent of this rift reverberates in the Arab coalition, particularly as the sidelined southern leaders are supported by the UAE," a government official told AFP, requesting anonymity. — AFP

ROUHANI SLAMS HARDLINERS IN LAST DEBATE BEFORE VOTE

RHETORIC SHARPENS AS VOTE NEARS

ANKARA: President Hassan Rouhani defended his efforts to improve Iran's economy and hit out at his hardline opponents in a final televised debate yesterday against challengers who aim to topple him in an increasingly acrimonious election next week. Rouhani, swept into office in a landslide four years ago on promises to reduce Iran's international isolation, is seeking a second term after negotiating an agreement with world powers to curb Iran's nuclear programme in return for lifting sanctions.

"If we want a better economy, we should not let groups with security and political backing to get involved in the economy," Rouhani said during the debate, in an unmistakable swipe at the Revolutionary Guards Corps, an elite military force with a vast business empire, which has backed his main hardline opponent Ebrahim Raisi. Normally measured in his public speeches, Rouhani has become increasingly forceful in recent days, giving voice to the grievances of reformers who say they have been oppressed since the 1979 Islamic Revolution by security forces like the Guards.

"I am surprised. Those of you who talk about freedom of speech these days... (you are) those who cut out tongues and sewed mouths shut," Rouhani told a rally on Monday in a thinly-veiled attack on Raisi, a former jurist involved in mass executions of political prisoners in the 1980s. "Our people want political and social freedom ... In the election they will not vote for those who knew only executions and prison for 38 years," Rouhani said in a rally on Tuesday.

He faces five challengers, led by two hardliners, cleric Raisi and Tehran Mayor Mohammed Beqar Qalibaf, who both say Rouhani has sold Iran's interests too

cheaply to the West and allowed the economy to decay through mismanagement. The first round is on May 19, with a run-off a week later if no candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote.

Although Iran's political system puts ultimate power in the hands of an unelected supreme leader, and all candidates are vetted by a hardline watchdog body, elections are nevertheless hard-fought contests that can bring dramatic change. As in two earlier, bruising debates, the main challengers tore into Rouhani's economic record, arguing that he failed to bring Iranians a better life despite the lifting of sanctions.

Raisi described a litany of poor economic performance under Rouhani, saying 250,000 small businesses had shut and cash payments to the poor should be raised: "Unemployment is high. People's purchasing power has dropped dramatically," he said. Rouhani's biggest worry is that some of the voters who carried him to a single-round victory in 2013 will stay home, disillusioned that the lifting of sanctions has brought few economic benefits and the pace of social change has been slow. "Rouhani is trying to reach out to voters who guaranteed his election four years ago by hoping to have a freer Iran," said a former official close to Rouhani's government.

Rouhani's deal to lift sanctions won the cautious backing of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, but Khamenei and his hardline loyalists criticize its failure to boost the economy. Benefits have been slow to arrive, in part because of unilateral US sanctions still in place over Iran's missile program, human rights record and allegations it supports terrorism. Rouhani's allies say the hardliners oppose deeper change and exposure to international competition in part because of the economic interests of the

Guards, which gained control of swathes of Iran's industry during its years of isolation.

'Crossing Red Lines'

Although Rouhani won more than three times as many votes as his closest challenger four years ago, he only narrowly avoided a second round with just over half the total votes. If he sheds just a bit of that support now, he could face a dangerous second round against a single opponent who unites the hardline faction. "I wanted to boycott this election because I am so disappointed with Rouhani's failure to bring more freedom to Iran," said teacher Reza Mirsadeh in the central city of Yazd. "But I have changed my mind. I will vote for Rouhani to prevent Raisi's win."

Iran's ultimate authority Khamenei has warned the public against protests like those that broke out after the disputed election of 2009, when reformers disputed the victory of hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. "Those who deviate from this path will be slapped in the face," Khamenei said in a televised speech on Wednesday. The Guards, their affiliated volunteer Basij militia and many Friday prayer leaders have thrown their support behind Raisi, a veteran jurist whose name has also been mentioned as a future supreme leader.

Qalibaf, a chisel-jawed former Guards commander, lacks Raisi's backing from the clerical establishment but also has millions of supporters for a hardline message on security and a populist economic platform. He has made a run-off more likely by resisting calls from other hardliners to step aside. Rouhani, meanwhile, has crossed traditional red lines in his rallies by openly criticizing the security forces and judiciary, trying to fire the enthusiasm of reformist voters. — AFP

POPE STARTS PILGRIMAGE TO FATIMA

FATIMA, Portugal: Pope Francis arrived in Portugal yesterday to join hundreds of thousands of expectant pilgrims in Fatima, the holy site where child shepherds had visions of the Virgin Mary 100 years ago. The



LEIRIA, Portugal: Pope Francis caresses a child as he arrives at the Monte Real Air Base yesterday. —AP

Argentine pontiff landed at a military base north of Lisbon to wild applause some 40 km away in Fatima where Catholic faithful watched the arrival of his plane live on giant screens. "This trip is special, it's a trip of prayer and a meeting with God and the Holy Mother of God," he told reporters on the plane, whose pilots put up a small Portuguese flag outside the cockpit on landing, followed by that of the Vatican. After holding talks with Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, Pope Francis was due to fly to Fatima by helicopter to meet the crowds.

'Freedom for Venezuela'

There, pilgrims from countries as varied as China, Venezuela and East Timor filled a giant, white esplanade that faces the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima in a display of fervour... with a dose of politics mixed in. "Virgin of Fatima, I ask you for freedom for Venezuela," read a message printed onto a flag carried by a pilgrim, competing with other banners above the crowd of faithful that filled the 400,000-capacity esplanade. "We are going to pray to Fatima and Pope Francis so that they

can intervene for a peaceful solution for Venezuela," said Jose Ornelas, a 59-year-old librarian who came all the way from Caracas, which along with other cities has been wracked by deadly anti-regime protests. "We are living in a violent spiral with so much hate and so much helplessness."

Fatima has become a major holy site since the Virgin is said to have appeared six times between May and October 1917 to three impoverished, barely-literate children - Jacinta, 7, Francisco, 9, and their cousin Lucia, 10. She apparently shared three major prophecies with them at a time marked by the ravages of World War I and persecution of the Church in a relatively new Portuguese republic.

These reportedly included a warning of a second war. Today - the 100th anniversary of the first reported apparition - Pope Francis will canonize Jacinta and Francisco, who have officially been credited with two miracles. One of these apparently took place in 2013, when a five-year-old Brazilian boy called Lucas recovered at lightning speed after he fell more than six metres from a window, smashing his skull. — AFP

IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA VIE FOR INFLUENCE IN SENEGAL

DAKAR: In an upmarket suburb of Senegal's seaside capital, a branch of Iran's Al-Mustafa University teaches Senegalese students Shi'ite Muslim theology, among other subjects. The branch director is Iranian and a portrait of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei hangs on his office wall. The teaching includes Iranian culture and history, Islamic science and Iran's mother tongue, Farsi; students receive free food and financial help. The university is a Shi'ite outpost in a country where Sufism, a more relaxed, mystical and apolitical form of Sunni Islam, is the norm.

Two miles away, the Islamic Preaching Association for Youth (APIJ) teaches the strand of Islam that predominates in Iran's great religious, political and military rival, Saudi Arabia. The APIJ funnels cash from donors in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Dubai and Kuwait to mosques run by Salafists - conservative Sunni Muslims who are sworn enemies of Iran. The APIJ's shelves are stacked with Salafist theology texts adorned with gold-leaf Arabic inscriptions - texts its imams use to preach in some 200 mosques across Senegal.

The two institutions embody a contest for influence in Senegal, and more widely in Africa, between Iran-backed Shi'ites and Saudi-funded Sunnis. It's one strand of a broad power struggle in which each side is spending millions of dollars to win converts. At stake is huge political influence, on a resource-rich continent that has often served as the theatre for rivalries between world powers.

Interviews with teachers and converts on both sides shed light on the depth of the divide and the ways both sides try to gain an edge. The Iranian director of Dakar's branch of Al-Mustafa makes no secret of his concerns over his Saudi rivals. "The Salafists came to Africa to destroy ... Islam," said Chiekh Abbas Motaghedhi in February. Up the road, in the APIJ building, the Salafists show equal passion. "We cannot accept the Iranian influence in Senegal, and we'll do everything to fight it," said Chiekh Ibrahim Niang, the imam, sitting legs crossed in a silky white robe. "We need to show the world that Shiism is wrong."

But for Senegal, either influence would be a disruption. It's a society that has always leaned towards political moderation, thanks largely to a tradition of tolerance espoused by its Sufi orders or "brotherhoods". "Where the brotherhoods are weak, as in eastern Senegal, is where the threat of radicalization is highest," said Bakary Sambe, director of the Dakar-based Timbuktu Institute and a coordinator for the Observatory on Religious Radicalism and Conflicts in Africa.

Iran has often been a destabilizing influence: In 2010, an Iranian arms shipment was intercepted in the Nigerian port of Lagos which Senegal suspected were destined for rebels in its southern Casamance region. Dakar briefly cut ties with Tehran over it. Salafism is the more troubling strand, Sufis say: It is largely free of political interference, but has shared cause with violence that Senegal has so far escaped.

"Salafists in Senegal are cousins of those making jihad in Mali," Ahmed Khalifa Niase, son of a deceased powerful Sufi Imam and vocal critic of Gulf Arab religious influence, told Reuters at his palace in Dakar. "They see themselves as soldiers of God purifying Islam." Salafists vehemently deny that link. "Salafism has nothing to do with terrorism," says Niang. "Yes, there are people who want to use force to impose the Salafist way, but we are very much against them. We are against violence."

Training Loyalists

Iran's supreme leader Khamenei supervises the activities of Al-Mustafa, which is based in the Iranian city of Qom and has branches in 50 countries. Thousands of students from across Africa receive enough Iranian money to enable them and their families to visit Qom while finishing their studies, said the son of a cleric based there who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Al-Mustafa in Dakar receives 150 students a year and gives them free tuition, a stipend and breakfast, its director of studies Chiekh Adrame Wane told Reuters. Graduates repay the generosity by promoting Iran online or in books, said a professor based in Qom. In countries like Somalia, Iran pays for weddings and home furniture, including a TV and a fridge, if both couples are Shi'ite or newly converted to Shi'ism.

Al-Mustafa is now Iran's main tool for promoting Shiism, said the professor, who also declined to be named. Its aim is "to train people to be loyal to the Islamic Republic and the Supreme Leader." A top official at Al-Mustafa in Qom, also declining to be named, gave a different view. "Our goal is purely cultural and educational. We want to promote higher education in Africa," he said.

"Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey and many other countries have built their religious schools in Africa. Alongside them, there are many American and British Christian schools, and even Hindu schools. So there is a rivalry in Africa and if we do not establish our presence there, we would fall behind."

Two senior Al-Mustafa officials said students and teachers at Al-Mustafa are routinely vetted by the Ministry of Intelligence or the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Reuters was unable to independently verify this. Motaghedhi, the Al-Mustafa director in Dakar, said the university had no involvement with the intelligence services or Iranian politics. "We're a private university ... Our only mission is to teach, nothing else," he said, adding that Khamenei was merely a patron and adopting Shi'ism was not a requirement for study. In the 2016 Iranian budget, Al-Mustafa received 2,390 billion rials (\$74 million). But the university receives more funding from the office of the Supreme Leader and other conglomerates under his command, one official said. Neither Motaghedhi nor Wane would comment on financial flows to the Dakar branch. — Reuters



VIENNA: Austria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sebastian Kurz (OeVP) attends a press conference yesterday. — AFP

AUSTRIA'S UNHAPPY COALITION ON BRINK

VIENNA: Austria's squabbling centrist coalition looked increasingly shaky yesterday as Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz made clear he would pull his center-right People's Party (OeVP) out of the government if he became its new chief. The 30-year-old rising political star is tipped to take over the OeVP following Wednesday's shock resignation of current boss Reinhold Mitterlehner after months of internal power struggles. If Kurz's party pulled the plug, the snap parliamentary elections that might result could herald the return to power of the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), which is riding high in opinion polls. "I think early elections are the right way," Kurz said.

"There's an offer on the table for me to continue in the current government, swap a few heads and act as if nothing had happened," he told a press conference in Vienna. "But I think we'd end up in the same situation we've been stuck in for a long time. Small compromises would be struck which wouldn't lead to any changes."

Deep rifts have been plaguing the "grand coalition" between the OeVP and the Social Democrats (SPOe) led by Chancellor Christian Kern, spurring speculation that the unhappy union will dissolve long before the next scheduled vote in autumn 2018. Kern denounced Kurz's call for snap polls and said he would seek out partners for a minority government if the OeVP quit the coalition. "We don't want new elections, we will continue to find practical political solutions in the parliament - with minority parties if necessary," Kern said yesterday.

Like other centrist factions in Europe, the SPOe and OeVP have suffered the wrath of disgruntled voters over rising unemployment and an influx of migrants. The parties, which have dominated Austrian politics since 1945, were dealt a disastrous blow in the 2016 presidential ballot when both their candidates were booted out in the first round. Instead the race pitted the FPÖ's Norbert Hofer against ex-Green party chief Alexander Van der Bellen, who ended up winning the drawn-out, scandal-plagued contest. — AFP

ZIMBABWE 'ODD COUPLE' SEEK TO OUST MUGABE

HARARE: One is a female former teenage guerrilla fighter who became President Robert Mugabe's closest ally, the other is a battle-hardened opposition leader often dismissed as a busted flush. But, despite their differences, Joyce Mujuru and Morgan Tsvangirai are in talks to lead a united opposition alliance to try to unseat Mugabe in Zimbabwe's much-anticipated election next year. The president, 93 and increasingly frail, has vowed to stand again to extend his rule, which began in 1980 and has been dominated by economic collapse and political repression.

His ZANU-PF party has a stranglehold on government, the civil service and military, and has a record of election interference and voter intimidation that presents a formidable obstacle for any challenger. "For us, it is more the merrier in this opposition alliance," Mujuru told AFP, speaking in the garden of her large house on outskirts of Harare. "This is a coming-together in great numbers as a democratic force that should give confidence to our people."

Zimbabwe's history of violent and fraud-riddled elections has eroded public trust in voting, but the coalition leaders hope a unified alternative to Mugabe will produce a high turnout that would make it harder to rig the result. "I don't expect Mugabe to say 'I am going to create conditions for free and fair elections,'" Tsvangirai, 65, told AFP at his office in a tower block in central Harare. "We need 80 percent participation, not 40 percent. If there is an overwhelming verdict, there will be no one who will stand in the way of the people."

Dangerous politics

Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, knows first-hand the dangers of tangling with Mugabe's regime. Since emerging as an anti-government trade unionist in the 1980s, he has often been targeted by the security forces and was brutally assaulted by police in 2007. He won the most votes in the first-round of the 2008 presidential elections, but poll officials said it was not enough to avoid a run-off against Mugabe.

As ZANU-PF loyalists unleashed a wave of violence, Tsvangirai pulled out of the race and became prime minister in a power-sharing government in which he was widely seen as being outmanoeuvred by Mugabe. "ZANU-PF has not won recent elections, it has rigged them," Tsvangirai said. "Anyone who is interested in ending ZANU-PF should unite, in spite of ideological differences. 'I think she (Mujuru) means well. I mean well. People will realize both of us are committed to the process.'"

Many of Tsvangirai's supporters and anti-Mugabe activists view Mujuru as an untrustworthy opposition voice. She served for 34 years as a loyal ZANU-PF minister and was a favorite to succeed Mugabe. As a youth, she fought in the war against colonial rule and was famed for shooting down an enemy helicopter. But in 2014 she was ousted as the country's vice-president in a purge when Mugabe's wife Grace accused her of plotting a coup.



GWERU, Zimbabwe: This file photo taken on Aug 13, 2016 shows Zimbabwe's opposition party MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai speaking with Zimbabwean opposition figure Joyce Mujuru during a rally. —AFP

After forming the new National People's Party, 62-year-old Mujuru may draw some support from former ZANU-PF voters, women, the business community - and even disgruntled members of the military. Seen as a relative moderate within Mugabe's circle, she recalls working well with Tsvangirai during the 2008 - 2013 power-sharing government. —AFP

SHOTS AT I COAST ARMY HQ AFTER MUTINEERS' APOLOGY

GOVT HOLDS EMERGENCY SECURITY MEETING

BOUAKE, Ivory Coast: Rebel soldiers surrounded Ivory Coast's army headquarters in Abidjan yesterday, firing shots in the air just hours after a spokesman for the protesters publicly apologized for an earlier mutiny. The gunfire erupted after disgruntled troops sealed off the area in the Plateau district of the Abidjan, the country's economic capital, an AFP correspondent said. The soldiers took up position in front of the military headquarters as other troops and police established a security

Council held an emergency meeting, a defense ministry source said.

In January, former rebels integrated into army ranks staged a mutiny that paralyzed activity in several towns of the west African country while they pressed their demands for bonuses. In meeting the demands of the ex-rebels, who controlled the northern half of Africa's biggest cocoa producer between 2002 and 2011, the authorities provoked a fresh mutiny by other troops and paramilitary gendarmes.

and soldiers also fired in the air at the northern entrance to the city. There was no immediate indication as to the reasons for the gunfire. Banks and many shops were also closed in the city yesterday.

Mutiny 'scared investors'

Organized without the knowledge of the press, the orchestrated ceremony - broadcast after it took place at the presidential palace - appeared to signal a dramatic end to the protest movement. As well as apologizing the rebel spokesman, named as Sergeant Fofana, said they were giving up all their financial demands. Ouattara said of the rebels that he "believed their words were sincere" and they would now be "exemplary soldiers".

Fofana said: "We apologize for the various situations we know we have caused. We definitely renounce all our financial demands." In a sign of allegiance, he then saluted the president, the images showed. Ouattara said Thursday the country was going through a "very, very difficult time" after a fall in the price of cocoa led to a net loss of 150 billion francs CFA (230 million euros) to the state budget. The mutiny had "scared Ivorians, as well as those who want to invest in and visit the country," he said.

He also announced that the government had given up plans to build new schools, a health center and cultural centers across the country, as well as delaying until 2018 a key election promise - bringing electricity to every village with more than 500 inhabitants. Last year, Ivory Coast launched an ambitious plan for the modernization of the military, including an overhaul of personnel as well as purchases of material worth euro1.2 billion. Part of the plan provides for the departure of several thousand men, particularly ex-rebels, who will not be replaced. —AFP



ABIDJAN: A rebel soldier gestures as he stands near the entrance of Ivory Coast's army headquarters yesterday as they fired shots in the air. —AFP

perimeter, the correspondent said.

It followed sporadic gunfire overnight in a military barracks in the country's second city of Bouake where troops staged an uprising in January. The shots came just hours after national television broadcast a ceremony in which a soldier presented as a spokesman for 8,400 former rebels, many of them based in Bouake, said they wished to apologize to President Alassane Ouattara for the mutiny. The country's National Security

Clashes claimed four lives in the political capital Yamoussoukro.

The mutineers, who demanded 12 million CFA francs (euro18,000) in payments for each soldier, obtained five million francs (euro7,500) in January and had been due to receive the rest of the sum this month, according to the rebels. The government had refused to give details of the negotiations. The AFP journalist said gunfire was heard throughout the night at the 3rd infantry battalion's Bouake barracks,

GAMBIA'S JUSTICE SYSTEM STRUGGLES WITH VICTIMS' IRE

BANJUL: Gambians want swift justice for the crimes of fallen dictator Yahya Jammeh's regime but the new government faces an uphill battle to jail the most prolific abusers. Silenced for 22 years, victims shot or tortured by Jammeh's security services are now speaking out, along with families whose loved ones have been pulled from recently found unmarked graves. But the cash-strapped government refuses to put anyone else in the dock, burnt by a high-profile, politically charged case this year that has run into procedural and systemic problems. "In terms of prosecutions, we are not at that stage yet," Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou told AFP in his dimly-lit office in central Banjul, reams of paperwork covering his desk. An overhaul of The Gambia's beleaguered courts, where judges were long accused of following the will of the president, not the law, is needed to ensure "successful prosecutions", the softly-spoken Tambadou said.

Thanks to his previous experience at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), he is part of a global network of transitional justice experts, whose skills he now wants to call on as he embarks on reforms. "We have inherited a broken criminal justice system and we need to fix that before we can move forward with any other plans," he stressed.

'NIA Nine'

The case of the "NIA Nine" - the trial of the former head of the Jammeh-controlled National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and eight subordinates from the feared security service - is seen as a warning against haste. A lack of evidence and calls for more time by lawyers have repeatedly delayed the case against the men accused of killing opposition political activist Solo Sandeng last year. His death sparked a reform movement that eventually unseated Jammeh, who was forced from office in January by west African powers after he refused to accept defeat in a December election.

"It doesn't seem like the judicial system is ready for serious trials," said Reed Brody, a US-based lawyer, who helped the victims of Chad's former dictator Hissene Habre prosecute him successfully more than a quarter century after leaving power. "It's not enough to have victims. You need to have people who can prove the individual responsibility of a higher-up," he added, after a recent visit to Banjul, saying this was doubly important if the state ever decided to prosecute Jammeh himself. Switzerland has extended the detention of former Gambian interior minister Ousman Sonko over a crimes against humanity probe, but has ruled out extradition on the grounds the country maintains the death penalty and lacks the legal capacity to try him. Souleymane Guengueng, a Chadian who campaigned for almost 25 years before seeing Habre convicted in 2016, travelled with Brody to advise the Gambian victims. —AFP

TEMER PRESIDENCY HITS YEAR MARK IN TURMOIL

BRASILIA: President Michel Temer celebrated one year at Brazil's helm yesterday with some questioning how much has changed in Latin America's biggest country since the traumatic impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. An accidental president, Temer moved up from the vice presidency 12 months ago when Rousseff was suspended - and later formally removed - for using illegal accounting maneuvers to mask the financial problems afflicting the government.

His main promise was to pacify a country roiled by its worst recession in history and a deep divide between Rousseff's leftist base and his own conservative wing. Although the region's most powerful economy is inching out of recession today, unemployment remains at a record high, with more than 13 million out of work, while the left-right divide is as bitter as ever. Finance Minister Henrique Meirelles marked the one-year anniversary by declaring that the country is finally on the mend. "Brazil is changing more in one year than it did in decades," he said. But opinion polls say eight out of 10 Brazilians are disappointed with Temer and barely one in 10 approve of his performance.

Strong medicine

An often aloof figure who built his career as a political insider rather than retail politician, Temer professes not to care about his unpopularity. He says

his emergency mandate, which runs out after elections in October 2018, is dedicated to taking the hard decisions needed to fix Brazil's economy. He is getting results in a conservative-dominated Congress that had previously fought Rousseff tooth and nail before almost gleefully stripping her of her office. The first big reforms have been a 20-year government spending cap and labor law changes that make it easier to hire and fire workers in order to stimulate economic activity. But the centerpiece is pension reform, which Temer argues is necessary to prevent the generous current system from sinking Brazil's deficit-burdened budget. The proposal, which would make people work longer, has prompted strong opposition. It has come in a range of forms, from invasions of Congress by disgruntled prison guard union members to a general strike last month that ended with violent confrontations in the streets of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

Otavio Guimaraes, history professor at the University of Brasilia, says Temer is having a hard time selling reforms when many think of him as a mere placeholder. "He got into power through the back door and proposed radical changes to the Brazilian state without having the popular vote," he said.

Corruption shadow

All Temer's attempts to move on from the Rousseff era are being overshadowed by a huge corruption



BRASILIA: Brazilian President Michel Temer gestures during the signing ceremony of the new ports' regularization decree at Planalto Palace on May 10, 2017. —AFP

scandal centered on embezzlement from Petrobras, the state oil company. Among the scores of senior politicians caught up in the "Car Wash" investigation are eight of Temer's own ministers. Just last month, almost a third of the Senate and 40 lower house deputies were targeted for probes. Temer himself faces allegations of involvement in the scheme, but has immunity for alleged crimes predating his presidency and is not being investigated. — AFP



CARACAS: In this May 10, 2017 photo, Bolivarian National Guards shield themselves from a jar of fecal matter thrown at them by anti-government protesters. — AP

VENEZUELA OFFICIAL SAYS POO-BOMBS 'CHEMICAL ARMS'

CARACAS: Venezuelan anti-government protesters who have been throwing human excrement at riot police during demonstrations are resorting to use of "chemical weapons", a senior Venezuelan official said. Judicial inspector general Marielys Valdez spoke out Wednesday after protesters hurled jars of feces dubbed "Poopootov cocktails" during the latest in weeks of clashes in Caracas. "That is a biochemical weapon... The use of biochemical weapons is fully classified as a crime and incurs strong penalties," she said on state television channel VTV. "The use of chemical weapons, in this case human and animal feces, has consequences... it can get into the water and cause terrible contamination" and disease, she added.

Daily clashes between demonstrators and security forces have left 38 people dead since April 1, prosecutors say. Protesters blame elected President Nicolas Maduro for an economic crisis that has caused food shortages. They are demanding early elections, accusing him of repressing protesters and trying to install a dictatorship. Maduro, who blames the crisis on what he calls a US-backed plot, brands the protesters "terrorists". He warned Thursday that people who say they are protesting and attack military bases will be tried in military courts. "Anyone who is captured attacking military bases will go where they have to go: to justice," Maduro said, while again denouncing the opposition demonstrations. Scores of people arrested in protests in recent days have been brought before military courts, human rights groups say. The state prosecution service said on Wednesday that under the constitution, civilians detained in protests should be tried by civil and not military courts. — AFP

AMERICAN MUSLIM SCHOOLS REACHING OUT TO NEIGHBORS

MOVE AIMS TO EASE FEARS

HUNTINGTON, New York: At a Roman Catholic high school in New York's Long Island suburbs, two dozen visiting Muslim students knelt and prayed while teens in uniform blazers from the host school looked on. The trip's agenda was simple: Give students whose schools are just 16 km apart but culturally worlds away a chance to get to know each other. It is also part of an ambitious initiative that will be adopted by nearly 80 US Islamic elementary, middle and high schools starting in the fall to give Americans a better picture of US Muslims at a time when many feel targeted by President Donald Trump's administration.

"Sometimes Muslims in today's society are afraid of other people judging them," Laiba Amjad, a 19-year-old senior at MDQ Academy Islamic school in Brentwood, New York, said during the visit to Saint Anthony's High School in nearby Huntington. "Other people are also afraid," she said, referring to non-Muslims. "They're thinking, 'What if that person is an extremist?'"

Americans are more likely to view Muslims, who make up 1 percent of the US population, as extremists if they do not know one personally, according to a February poll by the Pew Research Center. The same survey found that 60 percent of Americans who know a Muslim believe there is little or no support among them for extremism but only 48 percent of those who do not know a Muslim believe that.

"I hadn't really interacted with many Muslims before this," 17-year-old Chris Beirne said while he and fellow Saint Anthony's seniors ate lunch with the visiting Muslim students. "Muslims typically today are put into this one group with extremists," Beirne said. "I think the solution to that problem would be having events like this." In an effort to overcome that perception, the Council of Islamic

Schools in North America, the nation's only accrediting agency for Muslim schools, is changing its curriculum. It will ask its 78 accredited or member schools, located across 24 US states, to arrange meetings between their own students and those at other, non-Muslim schools. "People in this country, they want to know about Muslims, they want to know what's going on inside Islamic schools," said CISNA Director Sufia Azmat.

The Council is asking its educators to launch more volunteer projects outside the Muslim community, attend local government meetings and create a database of alumni to track their graduates' success. The move comes at a time when Muslims are under intense scrutiny, largely the result of extremist attacks carried out in the name of Islam in the United States and abroad. In the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history, an American-born gunman pledging allegiance to various Islamic militant groups shot 49 people to death at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, last June.

Mainstream Muslim religious leaders condemn the violence, saying their faith forbids it. Muslims are the second-most targeted religious group in the United States for hate crimes, behind Jews, according to the latest statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations released this month showed a 57 percent spike in the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes recorded in the United States last year compared with 2015. In the 10 days following US Election Day on Nov 8, physical and verbal attacks against Muslims ticked up 6 percent compared to the same period the prior year, the Southern Poverty Law Center said.

'Be Open'

The details of the US Islamic schools' new curriculum are still being hammered

out, but the purpose is clear, CISNA's Azmat said: "Be open to outsiders." A recent study of about a third of the nation's Muslim high schools conducted by the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia found that the students did not vary much from their non-Muslim peers in terms of interests and sense of being American. "These are very, very typical kids in a lot of ways, but also see themselves as Muslims and objecting to some things in American society just as a lot of Evangelical (Christian) and Jewish kids would," said Charles Glenn, an education policy expert who led the study of Islamic schools.

Many of the nation's Islamic schools have kept a low profile since the first school opened in the United States roughly 30 years ago, partly to avoid harassment. The outreach efforts could face similar resistance to those of US public schools that have attempted to teach about Muslims in social studies classes. Some parents in San Diego, California, and Chatham, New Jersey, recently objected to lessons about Muslims. "You have given your alliance to people that are against our own Constitution," Alice Kaiser, who is part of a group opposing the San Diego Unified School District's anti-Islamophobia program, said about the program at a school board meeting late last month.

The Al-Fatih Academy, an Islamic school in Reston, Virginia, has been used as a model by CISNA for community outreach. On Election Day, a group of Al Fatih eighth graders concerned about anti-Muslim rhetoric asked voters at a polling station about the political issues they cared about most. Some of the longest conversations were with Trump supporters, many of whom said they had never spoken to a Muslim before, according to principal Afeefa Syeed. — Reuters

ERDOGAN: 'NEW BEGINNING' IN TURKISH-US TIES

ISTANBUL: President Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday his visit to the United States next week could mark a "new beginning" in relations between the NATO allies that were shaken by a US decision to arm Kurdish YPG fighters in Syria. Erdogan repeated Ankara's criticism of President Donald Trump's decision, saying it ran counter to the two countries' strategic interests - but also sought to portray it as a relic of the Obama administration's Middle East policy.

"The United States is still going through a transition period. And we have to be more careful and sensitive," he told a news conference at the Ankara airport before departing for China and the United States. His meeting with Trump will be their first since the president's January inauguration. "Right now there are certain moves in the United States coming from the past, such as the weapons assistance to the YPG," Erdogan said. "These are developments that are in contradiction to our strategic relations with the United States and of course we don't want this to happen."

Ankara considers the YPG an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged an insurgency in Turkey's mainly Kurdish

southeast for three decades and is designated a terrorist group by Turkey, the European Union and United States. Washington sees the YPG as distinct from the PKK and as a valuable partner in the fight against Islamic State.

Erdogan said he did not want to see "a terrorist organisation alongside the United States", and that Turkey would continue military operations against Kurdish militia targets in Iraq and Syria. But the tone of Erdogan's comments, four days before he is due in Washington to meet Trump, contrasted with angry rebukes from Ankara earlier this week, when the foreign minister said every weapon sent to the YPG was a threat to Turkey and the defence minister described the move as a crisis.

Fraught Relationship

Erdogan, who had a fraught relationship with former President Barack Obama, said his meeting with Trump at the White House next week would be decisive. "I actually see this US visit as a new beginning in our ties," he said. The meeting would be an opportunity to "correct the mistake" of the US decision to arm the YPG, said Prime Minister Binali Yildirim. "We have suggested other solutions," Yildirim said,



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan makes a statement yesterday prior to his trip to China, followed by a trip to Washington. — AP

speaking to reporters at an event in London. "I hope that during the meeting of our president next week with President Donald Trump this issue will be changed to a positive trajectory." — Reuters



MASTUNG, Pakistan: Pakistani security officials examine the site of a powerful explosion in this district some 20 km south of provincial capital Quetta yesterday. — AFP

PAKISTAN SUICIDE BOMBING KILLS 17, WOUNDS DOZENS ISLAMIC STATE CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY

MASTUNG, Pakistan: A suicide bomb blast that targeted the convoy of a top senator in southwest Pakistan killed at least 17 people and wounded more than 30 others, officials told AFP yesterday. The attack in Mastung district, roughly an hour east of provincial capital Quetta, struck a vehicle carrying the deputy chairman of Pakistan's upper house Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri. It was later claimed by the Islamic State group, which has been making inroads in the country through alliances with local militant outfits.

"I am alive, Allah has saved my life, it was a sudden blast, broken pieces of the windscreen hit me, I am injured but safe. The driver and other people sitting next to me were badly injured," Haideri said on private TV channel SAMAA. Survivors, several covered in blood, were picking up body parts that lay

scattered in the road among vehicles twisted by the blast. Paramilitary troops and a bomb disposal squad were deployed outside a nearby madrassa where the convoy had been headed for a graduation ceremony.

Pakistani, Afghan, Chinese and Bangladeshi flags - the nationalities of students at the seminary - were on display ahead of the ceremony. "The death toll has reached 17 and more than 30 people have been injured," said Dr Daad Muhammad, a hospital administrator. A local government official and a senior police official confirmed to AFP that it was a suicide bombing and the attacker came riding a motorcycle and blew himself up close to Haideri's vehicle.

Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility via its Amaq news agency. "A martyrdom-seeker from the Islamic State targeted with his explosive vest a convoy

of the deputy chairman of the Pakistan Senate, Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, in Mastung district, south of the city of Quetta," the group said. Haideri is a top official of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F), one of the country's most powerful religious political parties.

JUI-F has been targeted by the Pakistani Taliban in the past - even though the party leaders have acted as negotiators between the militants and Pakistan government on several occasions. Pakistan has been battling Islamist and nationalist insurgencies in mineral-rich Balochistan since 2004, with hundreds of soldiers and militants killed in the fighting. Bordering Iran and Afghanistan, it is the largest of Pakistan's four provinces, but its roughly seven million inhabitants have long complained they do not receive a fair share of its gas and mineral wealth. — AFP

MALAYSIA DEPORTS 3 TURKS WANTED OVER GULEN LINKS

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has deported three Turkish nationals wanted by Ankara for alleged links to a US-based preacher accused of being behind a failed coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. National police chief Khalid Abu Bakar tweeted that the men were "deported back to Ankara" Thursday night, despite concerns from rights groups who fear Malaysia is bowing to pressure from Turkey.

Turgay Karaman and Ihsan Aslan were arrested last week under a security law which allows detention without trial for 28 days. Two days later Turkish academic Ismet Ozcelik was also detained - ostensibly for national security reasons. "Police investigations showed they were involved in FETO activities and are wanted by Turkey," Khalid said in a separate statement. Turkish authorities allege last year's coup attempt against Erdogan was masterminded by US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen and his so-called Fethullah Terror Organization (FETO).

Khalid said the men's travel documents had been cancelled by Ankara and so they were regarded as illegal immigrants in Malaysia. But rights groups have said they fear Malaysia may be responding to pressure from Turkey, which has mounted a huge crackdown on perceived opponents since the failed coup. Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said via a statement yesterday that the Malaysian government's "duplicity and crass abuse of the rights of these three men really sets this case apart". "It's like Malaysia just hung a signboard around its neck that reads 'handmaiden of Turkish repression'."

Robertson added that Malaysia's decision to deport the men meant that they could face possible torture and prolonged detention, followed by an unfair trial. The UN Human Rights Office for Southeast Asia said it "condemned" the deportation. "We have serious concerns regarding their safety upon their return to Turkey," it said via its Facebook page. "We have concerns that other Turkish nationals with alleged links to the Gulen movement may be similarly arrested and deported from Malaysia."

Last week, the organization had urged Malaysia to refrain from deporting the men to Turkey. Erdogan's government has detained or sacked tens of thousands of people under a state of emergency imposed after the attempted power grab. The crackdown focuses on alleged supporters of Gulen. — AFP

DON'T CALL ME CAITLYN: BABY NAME FALLS IN POPULARITY

WASHINGTON: Don't call me Caitlyn. A year after Caitlyn Jenner announced her new name and gender, the popularity of the name Caitlyn plummeted more than any other baby name, according to Social Security's annual list of the most popular baby names. In fact, the four names that dropped the most were all variations of the same name: Caitlin, Caitlyn,

Katelynn and Kaitlynn. "It was inevitable," said Laura Wattenberg, founder of Babynamewizard.com. "Caitlyn was already falling in popularity. Now it is suddenly controversial."

Each year, the Social Security Administration releases the top 1,000 baby names and uses the announcement to drive traffic to their website, where workers can start tracking their

benefits long before they retire. Emma was the top baby name for girls for the third year in a row. It was followed by Olivia, Ava, Sophia and Isabella, the Social Security Administration announced yesterday. Noah was the top baby name for boys for the fourth year in a row. It was followed by Liam, William, Mason and James. —AP



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INDIA CALLS FOR DEEPER TIES WITH LANKA

COLOMBO: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared yesterday his desire for a "quantum jump" in relations with Sri Lanka, as New Delhi jostles with regional rival Beijing for influence in the island nation. India had always considered its smaller neighbor to be within its sphere of influence but watched Sri Lanka drift closer to China under former strongman President Mahinda Rajapakse. Modi's visit to Sri Lanka - his second since coming to power in 2014 - is being seen as New Delhi's attempt to win back support and counter Beijing's push for closer ties with the Indian Ocean nation.

"I believe we are at a moment of great opportunity in our ties with Sri Lanka. An opportunity to achieve a quantum jump in our partnership across different fields," Modi told a Buddhist conference in Colombo. His comments came as Sri Lanka rebuffed a Chinese request to dock a submarine at one of its ports. Chinese-backed projects soared under Rajapakse, who relied heavily on Beijing for economic and diplomatic support as Western nations threatened his administration with sanctions over atrocities committed during the decades-long civil war which ended in 2009.

Sri Lankan President Maithripala



NORWOOD, Sri Lanka: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (center) joins hands with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena (left) and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe after addressing a public rally in this tea-growing town yesterday. —AFP

Sirisena came to power in Jan 2015 promising to review Chinese-funded projects signed by his predecessor and rebuild ties with India. As Modi touched down in Colombo for a two-day visit Thursday, a top Sri Lankan defense official confirmed Beijing had been denied permission for a port call by a Chinese submarine. The official,

who did not wish to be named, would not comment on the timing of the decision. Two submarine calls at the Colombo harbour in 2014 had reportedly angered India, which considered it to be undermining their security.

In Beijing, China's foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuan said they were aware of the reports, but stressed

both sides maintained "good cooperation". "China and Sri Lanka enjoy good friendship," he said. Modi pledged India's commitment to their "Sri Lankan brothers and sisters" and the "indivisible" ties between the two neighbors. "We will continue to invest in driving positive change and economic growth to deepen our development co-operation," he said.

Rajapakse's political allies among the majority-Sinhalese community had called for a black flag protest during Modi's visit, accusing India of trying to grab land in a strategic port district. But the former president sought a meeting with Modi on Thursday night and the two had a "cordial" discussion, confirmed Indian diplomats who provided no further details.

Tea diplomacy

From Colombo, Modi flew to the island's tea growing central district of Nuwara Eliya to open an India-gifted hospital and address tens of thousands of plantation workers of Indian origin. The nearly one million ethnic Tamils in central Sri Lanka are descendants of indentured labor brought to work in coffee, rubber and tea plantations by British colonial rulers in the 19th century. — AFP

INDIA TURNS ON ROHINGYAS, SEEKING THEIR DEPORTATION

REFUGEES TARGETED AS KASHMIR BOILS

JAMMU: It was around 3 am when Abdul Kader was awoken by his children's screams as flames spread through their corrugated iron and wood shack and dense smoke filled the air. The 37-year-old burkha seller and his family escaped last month's blaze unhurt, as did the six other Muslim Rohingya refugee families living there, but it has left the community in India's northern city of Jammu fearful and on edge. "The police said it was an electrical short circuit, but we think it wasn't an accident," said Kader, sitting on the floor of a madrasa in a slum in Jammu's Narwal area. "They don't like us here and want us to leave. We were driven from Burma, then Bangladesh and now they want us to leave India. The situation is bad for us wherever we go."

For almost a decade, India has been a safe haven for thousands of Rohingya fleeing persecution in Myanmar. Around 14,000 Rohingya live here, with half residing in the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). But rising tensions with bordering Pakistan and a spike in separatist violence in neighboring Kashmir, coupled with nationalist anti-Islamic sentiment globally, are threatening the Rohingya once again as demands grow for their eviction.

Rightwing political parties, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party, blame them for crime in Jammu, straining public resources, and claim they pose a threat to security. As a result, India has started registering and monitoring the Rohingya, a move which

activists fear could eventually force them back to Myanmar where they face atrocities, including murder, rape and arson attacks. "Indian authorities know very well the abuses the Rohingya community have been facing in Myanmar," said Amnesty International India's Raghu Menon. "Deporting them and abandoning them to their fates would be unconscionable."

Most Persecuted Community

Often described as the most persecuted community, the minority Rohingya have for years faced discrimination, repression and violence in northwestern Myanmar. Denied citizenship by the largely Buddhist government since the 1990s, they face apartheid-like conditions. Hundreds have died in communal violence, and thousands have sought refuge in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Bangladesh. Around 75,000 people have fled to Bangladesh just since October as the military cracks down on Rohingya insurgents.

Mass killings and gang rapes by the army in recent months have been documented, prompting the UN to claim this could be seen as crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Some 7,000 Rohingya refugees live in Jammu, mostly residing in urban slums, eking out a meager living selling garbage or doing manual work for Indians, often underpaid and exploited.

"They are extremely poor and settle wherever they find safety," said Suvendu Rout from ACCESS, a Delhi charity pro-

viding Rohingya refugees with literacy and skills training. "Many are construction workers and are contributing to building India's infrastructure, while others collect rubbish which helps keep our cities clean."

Parasites, Criminals, Security Threat

But a contrasting narrative is being spun in J&K, a troubled state which is disputed by bordering Pakistan, and where a separatist insurgency has simmered for almost three decades. Over the last six months, Jammu has witnessed a string of anti-Rohingya public protests by political parties, Hindu groups, student bodies and the business community. Billboards demanding refugees "Quit Jammu" have been put up, local media have branded them "parasites", Rohingya effigies torched on the streets, and a petition filed in the High Court seeking their eviction from J&K.

Arun Gupta, spokesman for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is also part of J&K's coalition government, says public hostility towards them is growing. "Jammu is a small place, and with this kind of influx, it is problematic. They are into a lot of illegal activities and since they are poor and idle, they are easily accessible to anti-national elements seeking to destabilize Jammu," said Gupta.

"Kashmir is already on boil. We do not want this to spread to Jammu. People here have started to realise this and believe these refugees should leave as of yesterday." — Reuters

TAIWANESE CHILD KILLER ESCAPES DEATH PENALTY

TAIPEI: A schizophrenic Taiwanese man who decapitated a three-year-old girl in public on a busy Taipei street escaped the death penalty yesterday as he was sentenced to life in prison for what the court called an "appalling" crime. Wang Ching-yu, 34, had pleaded guilty to killing the child in a crime that shocked the generally peaceful island after overpowering her mother near a metro station. He beheaded the girl with a kitchen knife as horrified bystanders tried to stop him.

Wang had told the court that he hallucinated he was a Chinese emperor from Sichuan province and believed that killing the girl would bring him concubines to "carry on his family line," according to reports. When asked in court if he knew why murder was wrong, he had said he knew he had made a mistake because no Sichuan woman had come forward to bear him children after the killing.

Prosecutors called the crime "extremely cold-blooded" and demanded the death penalty. But judge Tsai Shou-hsun told a Taipei district court yesterday that he would instead be jailed for life as he had a "mental handicap". Wearing black-framed glasses, a white T-shirt and track pants, his head shaved, Wang remained calm as he listened to the verdict, responding: "I understand". The victim's family were not in court. In a statement after the verdict, the court said the decision was in accordance with international human rights covenants protecting those with mental illnesses. It said Wang had been expelled from school and had gone through drug rehabilitation, but was reclusive and isolated, developing schizophrenia and hallucinations. However, the statement also described the killing as "grotesquely violent", adding that Wang had known murder was illegal and had dodged supervision in order to commit it. "He has not shown empathy and regret, and after assessment the chance of committing crime again is still high," the statement said.

Death penalty debate

Taiwan resumed capital punishment in 2010 after a five-year hiatus. Executions are reserved for serious crimes such as aggravated murder. Some politicians and rights groups have called for its abolition, but various opinion surveys show majority support for the death penalty. After the decapitation in March last year, hundreds of Taiwanese, many dressed in black and wearing stickers reading "Death penalty is necessary," called for Wang to be executed. — AFP

Business

Kuwait Times 55

Mexican beef exporters look to Muslim markets 16

S&P, Dow slip as banks drag; Nasdaq stays flat 17

US used-car glut: It is a dealer's dream, automakers' nightmare 8

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2017



US retail sales rise broadly; consumer prices rebound 20



BEIJING: In this Jan 22, 2003 file photo, a Chinese shopkeeper stands behind a row of beef products at an open air market in Beijing.—AP

CHINA, US SEAL LANDMARK TRADE DEAL

US BEEF, NATURAL GAS AND SERVICES TO GET ACCESS TO CHINA MARKET

BEIJING: Beijing and Washington announced yesterday an agreement giving US beef, natural gas and certain financial services access to China's massive market in a deal highlighting the warm ties nurtured by their presidents. The deal was unveiled a month after Chinese President Xi Jinping and Donald Trump launched a 100-day action plan on economic cooperation during their meeting at the US leader's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. Relations between the two governments have been warmer than expected after Trump lashed out at Beijing throughout the US presidential campaign.

"We are excited about US trade policies and I think you probably saw we made an announcement of a 100 day economic plan with the Chinese so I think we're very happy with how we're proceeding with the Chinese," US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said as he arrived for a meeting of G7 finance ministers in Italy. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross told reporters at the White House that the deal will help reduce the US trade deficit with China, which reached nearly \$350 billion last year. "This was pretty much a herculean accomplishment to get this done," Ross said, according to Bloomberg News. "This is more than has been done in the whole history of US-China relations on trade," Ross said. In Beijing, foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the two countries "enjoy very close economic cooperation".

"The nature of this relationship is mutually beneficial. The two sides decided to press ahead with this economic plan and the fact that much progress has been made in a short amount of time shows... we can establish more cooperation for the joint benefit of the people," he said.

'Paltry benefits'

During last year's election, Trump had threatened to impose trade tariffs and label Beijing a currency manipulator, neither of which he has done. But his tone changed after he took office and met with Xi in April, calling the Chinese leader

a "good man" who was trying to help Trump rein in North Korea. But a report by Capital Economics consultancy saw "paltry trade benefits" from the deal because it would amount to "just a few billion dollars." The agreement "won't make any meaningful difference to the bilateral trade imbalance, which could still trigger a flare-up of tensions between the two sides in the future," it said.

Ending beef ban

Under the agreement announced by both nations, China will authorise US beef imports by July 16 while the United States will lift barriers on Chinese cooked poultry exports "as soon as possible". China banned US beef following a case of mad cow disease in the United States in 2003. Beijing had announced an end to a 14-year embargo on American beef last year, but the decision has yet to be implemented. Regaining access to China, the world's most populous country with 1.4 billion people, has been a key goal of American cattle farmers.

The deal will also allow Chinese companies to buy liquified natural gas from the United States. "This will let China diversify, somewhat, their sources of supply and will provide a huge export market for American LNG producers," Ross said. China will also give permission to wholly foreign-owned financial services firms to provide credit rating services in the country. And it will give "full and prompt market access" to US-owned suppliers of electronic payment services, including credit and debit card transactions—something China had already said it would do in 2015 after losing a case at the World Trade Organization. The joint statement said the United States would send a delegation to China's One Belt, One Road summit on Sunday and Monday—Xi's signature project. — AFP



PALM BEACH: In this April 6, 2017 file photo, Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) smiles at US President Donald Trump as they pose for a photograph at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla.—AP

MEXICAN BEEF EXPORTERS LOOK TO MUSLIM MARKETS

MOVE TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON US BUYERS

MEXICO CITY/CHICAGO: Mexico's growing beef industry is targeting Muslim consumers in the Middle East for its prime cuts as it seeks to reduce dependence on buyers in the United States. The potential for a US-Mexico trade war under President Donald Trump has accelerated efforts by Mexican beef producers to explore alternative foreign markets to the United States, which buys 94 percent of their exports worth nearly \$1.6 billion last year.

Trump has vowed to redraw terms of trade with Mexico and Canada to the benefit of the United States. Mexican beef companies fear they may be dragged into a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement between the three countries. That has firms looking to the Middle East, where most meat is imported from non-Muslim countries using animals slaughtered by the halal method prescribed by Islamic law.

Mexico, the world's sixth biggest beef producer, plans to quadruple exports of halal beef to 44 million pounds (20,000 tons) by the end of 2018 from 11 million pounds (5,000 tons) this year, according to data from the Mexican cattle growers association AMEG. The country should have 15 plants certified to produce halal meat by the end of next year, up from a current six, according to AMEG data.

Jesus Vizcarra, chief executive and owner of SuKarne, Mexico's biggest beef exporter, said his company sees big potential for sales to Muslim-majority

countries. "We have to seek out more markets," he said in an interview, pointing to near-term targets in Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Lebanon. "There's an opportunity in these Middle Eastern countries," said Vizcarra, who is known in Mexico as the King of Beef and has boasted of being born in a slaughterhouse.

At SuKarne's sprawling Monarca plant, located 270 miles (435 km) west of the Mexican capital in Michoacan state, more than 150,000 cows leisurely pick at row after row of grain channels in dusty feed lots. The plant is the company's first halal-certified facility and earlier this year began its first-ever shipments to Muslim markets.

"Eyes wide open"

Mexico's cattle growers' association sent a trade mission to Dubai and Qatar in late February to meet potential buyers, said Rogelio Perez, AMEG's top trade official. Inspectors from the UAE will visit Mexico by June, after Saudi inspectors were in Mexico in March, he said. "They left with a very good taste in their mouths regarding Mexican production systems," he said.

Plants must be certified as halal compliant by third-party companies such as US-based Halal Transactions of Omaha or United Arab Emirates-based RACS. Earlier this year, Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, expressed interest in buying Mexican beef for the first time although no deals

have yet been cut. Sales to Muslim countries would take a bite out of the market share for halal meat held by beef packers from the United States and Brazil, according to industry and trade sources. Mexico's beef industry is able to grow its export markets due to a successful push to meet exacting U.S. standards and modernize the sector over the past two decades.

That has put Mexican packers in a strong position to diversify away from the U.S. market. "It was our big strength until President Donald arrived, and now it's our major weakness," said Bosco de la Vega, president of Mexico's state farm council, adding that Mexico should limit beef exports to the United States to a maximum of half the overall flow.

He said Mexico can do so in the next five years. Russia is considering buying large volumes of Mexican beef, and Mexico is also seeking to expand shipments to existing buyers like Japan and South Korea. Mexico's herd hit a record 31 million animals in 2015 and totaled 30.8 million in 2016, producing 4.142 billion pounds and exports of 712 million pounds.

Top exporters Brazil, India and Australia each export over 2.5 billion pounds. "We're on the path of diversification," Mexican Agriculture Minister Jose Calzada recently told reporters. "And we won't stop, because these occasional insults from the United States toward Mexico have opened our eyes." — Reuters

GERMANY SET TO ACHIEVE RECORD GROWTH: ANALYSTS

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: The German economy expanded sharply in the first three months of 2017, official data showed yesterday, putting Europe's powerhouse on track to beat a late-1970s record for its longest-ever recovery.

Germany's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 0.6 percent in the first quarter compared with the previous three months, adjusted for price, seasonal and calendar effects, federal statistics authority Destatis said. That was in line with forecasts from analysts surveyed by data company Factset. "The German economy is in the run-up to the longest (but not strongest) recovery phase" since the 1970s, said UniCredit analyst Andreas Rees. The German economy has so far expanded in 15 of the past 16 quarters-well within reach of a previous record run of 18 out of 19 quarters of growth between the mid-1970s and early 1980.

At the moment, growth in Germany has been picking up again after a slump last summer following Britain's shock vote to quit the European Union. Fear that trade barriers could spring up with Britain, one of Europe's largest economies and a key trading partner for Germany, meant that Brexit sapped the confidence of businesspeople, investors and consumers alike. The economy expanded by just 0.2 percent in July to September, well short of the pace achieved in the first half of the year. But with no immediate concrete impact from the referendum result, improving morale and strong fundamentals brought growth back to 0.4 percent between October and December.

"Never-ending success"

"Germany's economic performance is a never-ending success story," commented analyst Carsten Brzeski of ING Diba bank. High levels of employment, rising wages and low interest rates have all boosted consumer spending, while government spending has increased following the refugee influx of 2015-16, he said.

Meanwhile, a weak euro makes German exports more price competitive. "There are no signs that this recovery could come to an abrupt halt," Brzeski said, adding that structural reforms and increased public and private investment would be needed to boost the economy still further. Using a year-on-year comparison, GDP expanded by 1.7 percent from the first quarter of 2016, adjusted for calendar effects, Destatis said. —AFP

NEPAL SIGNS UP TO CHINA'S NEW SILK ROAD PLAN

KATHMANDU: Nepal yesterday signed up to China's new Silk Road drive, a massive infrastructure project spanning some 65 countries at the centre of the Asian giant's push to expand its global influence. The long discussed deal between impoverished Nepal and its much bigger neighbour comes just days before China hosts a summit for 28 leaders near Beijing, showcasing the ambitious plan. The One Belt, One Road Initiative (OBOR) spearheaded by President Xi Jinping would see 60 percent of the global population and around a third of global GDP linked through a network of Chinese-bankrolled ports, railways, roads and industrial parks.

The deal will see China plough money into Nepal for a series of projects including boosting its road network, power grid and a new railway connecting the capital Kathmandu with Lhasa in Tibet.

"We believe China will bring more investment to Nepal, helping the country overcome its status as a landlocked and least developed nation," said Nepal Foreign Minister Prakash Saran Mahat at the signing of the deal yesterday. Analysts have expressed concern over the Asian giant's attempt to take a lead in global commerce, cautioning that an integrated world trade system where China's Communist party sets the



BEIJING: In this April 28, 2017 photo, an attendee at a conference looks up near a portrait of Chinese President Xi Jinping with the words "Xi Jinping and One Belt One Road" and "One Belt One Road strategy," in Beijing. —AP

rules could come with serious risks and hidden costs. New York-based Fitch Ratings said that political motivations might trump "genuine infrastructure needs and commercial logic", leading to "a heightened risk of projects proving unprofitable".

Struggling countries could be saddled with Chinese loans requiring payment regardless of project performance, Fitch Ratings said. In Kathmandu, China's Ambassador to Nepal Yu Hong appeared aware of such criticism and described the plan as a "symphony performed by an orchestra" not China's "solo show" in a short speech at the signing ceremony. "The Initiative is not going to be China's solo show. A better analogy would be that of a symphony performed by an orchestra composed of all participating countries," Yu said.

"The One Belt, One Road Initiative will bring new opportunities for China-Nepal cooperation and South Asia development," she added. The newly inked deal will be closely watched by Nepal's other large neighbor, India, which has traditionally played the role of big brother to the much smaller country. Landlocked Nepal remains dependent on India for the majority of its imports, but the previous administration aggressively courted China as part of a nationalist drive to decrease the country's reliance on New Delhi. —AFP

REPORT CARD FOR GLOBAL ECONOMY: TRIES HARD, COULD DO BETTER

LONDON: Setting aside a few uncomfortable economic truths such as the increasing US skills gap, eye-wateringly high unemployment in parts of the eurozone, and growing income inequality in China, the world economy has been doing pretty well this year. The issue is: how well and how sustainable?

In the United States, the economy has been strong enough for the Federal Reserve to start raising interest rates, slowly. In the euro zone, growth is robust enough for the European Central Bank to think about dropping public warnings of risks. China, meanwhile, has so far staved off last year's dire warnings of a sharp, potentially damaging, slowdown.

But much of this comes courtesy of billions of dollars, euros, and other currencies being pumped into the global economy. In some cases, it is still being pumped in. And the results are not exactly bracing. The International Monetary Fund expects the world economy to grow 3.5 percent this year — not bad until you remember it averaged 4.2 percent over the 10 years before the financial crisis.

The IMF sees the US economy growing at 2.3 percent this year, below the 2.6 percent average for 1999-2008. Ditto the eurozone — 2017 growth at 1.7 percent versus 2.1 percent. For China, the numbers are 6.6 percent and 10.1 percent, respectively. After their spring meeting last month, the IMF and World Bank sounded a bit passionless about it all. "The global economy is gaining momentum, but risks remain tilted to the downside," they said. So a near 10-year deluge of global central bank stimulus has not brought things back to where they were and a left a large question about the sustainability of what has been achieved.

As European Central Bank President Mario Draghi said in a slightly different context in the past week: "It is too early to declare success." Most economists appear to believe the global economy is strong enough to keep going, if not exactly at a tear. The coming week will probably confirm this, but could also provide something of a reality check.

Ticking away

In what may be an example for the global economy as a whole, the United States is expected to report slower industrial output growth for April—that is, it continues to grow (at 0.3 percent), but at a lesser rate than March's 0.5 percent.

But more attention is likely to be paid to the respective reports of the Federal Reserve banks of Philadelphia and New York—the Philly Fed and Empire State. —Reuters

STARTUP'S CHALLENGE TO DEUTSCHE BAHN HITS THE BUFFERS

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Berlin rail startup Locomore has been placed into administration just months after it launched a challenge to state-owned monolith Deutsche Bahn, which dominates long-distance train travel in Germany. The Berlin-Charlottenburg court yesterday confirmed the firm had triggered the proceedings the day before. "We will know in the course of the day what happens with the operation" of the train linking the capital with Stuttgart in southwest Germany, Locomore financial director Katrin Seiler told AFP.

A service had been set to depart Berlin in the early afternoon Friday, but the company was still in talks with the court-appointed administrator over whether it could leave. Launched in mid-December with modernized 1970s carriages and lower prices than Deutsche Bahn, Locomore offered one return trip per day between Berlin and Stuttgart, and had plans to expand to other lines. The firm pointed to successful crowdfunding drives as evidence of demand for an alternative to the state-owned service.

But low bookings and maintenance problems meant it had to cut service to four days a week.

By early April, the firm said it had transported some 70,000 passengers and was already planning higher capacity and more frequent services for the future.

Deutsche Bahn still operates 99 percent of long-distance services in Germany, despite the sector being liberalized in 1994. Competition in regional markets is more intense, with the state-owned firm's share falling to 72 percent against numerous local alternatives according to specialist consultancy BSL. —AFP



NEW YORK: An American flag hangs on the front of the New York Stock Exchange on an evening, in New York. Stocks opened lower on Wall Street, yesterday.— AP

S&P, DOW SLIP AS BANKS DRAG; NASDAQ STAYS FLAT

EUROPEAN MARKETS CONTINUE RALLY

NEW YORK: The S&P 500 and the Dow edged lower yesterday as financial stocks fell, but losses on the Nasdaq were kept in check by a rise in technology shares. With the first-quarter earnings season coming to an end, investors are looking to the Federal Reserve, Trump administration and economic data for fresh trading catalysts. A risk-off sentiment has dominated trading this week after President Donald Trump unexpectedly fired his FBI chief, the potential fallout of which could delay Trump's pro-growth policy.

"Today, the focus is on macro news, while the political situation in Washington continues to linger. So we are looking at a cautious market," said Peter Cardillo, chief market economist at First Standard Financial in New York. Data from the Commerce Department showed retail sales increased by 0.4 percent in April, but fell short of an estimated 0.6 percent rise.

US consumer prices rebounded in April, a Labor Department report showed, pointing to a steady rise in inflation that could make the case for an interest rate hike next month.

At 9:38 am EDT the Dow Jones industrial average was down 44.07 points, or 0.21 percent, at 20,875.35, the S&P 500 was down 4.42 points, or 0.18 percent, at 2,390.02 and the Nasdaq Composite was down 1.87 points, or 0.03 percent, at 6,114.10.

Financials and industrials, which have gained the most in the Trump-inspired trade, were the biggest drags on the S&P. Technology was up 0.13 percent, lifted by Apple. JC Penney reported low-

er-than-expected comparable store sales, sending its shares down 9 percent. GE was the top percentage loser on the Dow, down 1.7 percent after Deutsche Bank downgraded its shares to "sell" from "hold".

Meanwhile, European stock markets seemed happy yesterday to quietly carry the week's gains into the weekend, while Wall Street's worries about retail weakness were compounded by soft core inflation data.

The dollar weakened in response, and so did the New York stock market at the opening as earlier optimism about solid jobs data was mitigated, while T-bonds rose as investors became less sure about an early rate hike.

'Cooler than expected'

"Treasury yields and the US dollar are lower, as the data included a cooler-than-expected read on consumer price inflation," said analysts at Charles Schwab. European equity markets, meanwhile, were modestly optimistic, as they awaited political developments in coming days.

Emmanuel Macron will be sworn in as French president tomorrow and is expected to line up a government the following day, giving a first indication of the outlook for his economic reform plans. Germany's most populous state North Rhine-Westphalia votes in a regional election tomorrow, a key test for Angela Merkel's re-election chances as chancellor.

Confidence rattled

Earlier in Asia, traders took a step

back ahead of the weekend with confidence rattled by a series of below-par Chinese data and the lingering fallout of Donald Trump's shock firing of the head of the FBI, which some fear could lead to a crisis that will knock the president's economy-boosting agenda off centre.

Tokyo's Nikkei index closed down 0.4 percent from a 17-month high, while Sydney shed 0.7 percent and Singapore gave up 0.3 percent. Seoul, which closed Thursday at a record high, eased 0.5 percent. Wellington, Taipei and Manila also slipped.

But Hong Kong rose 0.1 percent extending a rally to five days. Bloomberg News reported, without naming sources, that China had made preparations to support the Hang Seng Index if needed ahead of the expected visit of President Xi Jinping to the city for the July 1 handover celebrations.

Shanghai—which has fallen about seven percent in the past month on worries about a state crackdown on leveraged investing—ended up 0.7 percent with speculation mainland shares were also being given state backing. The dollar declined against the yen and euro, having enjoyed a surge Thursday on comments from a top Federal Reserve official backing three more interest rate hikes this year.

And on oil markets both main contracts pressed on with their recovery from last week's sharp losses, with investors cheering a bigger-than-expected drop in US inventories and signs an OPEC output cut was kicking in. —Agencies

LUXURY GIANT RICHEMONT SEES PROFITS HALVED ON WATCH WOES

ZURICH: Swiss luxury goods giant Richemont said yesterday its full-year net profit was nearly cut in two as sales of high-end watches ticked lower. Richemont, second only to France's LVMH in the luxury world, posted a net profit of 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) during its 2016/2017 fiscal year-down 46 percent from a year earlier.

Its sales meanwhile slumped to 10.6 billion euros, down from 11 billion during the previous 12-month period. A drop in profits had been expected, since the results the company

announced a year ago were padded with 639 million euros from the merger of its online sales platform Net-a-Porter and an Italian counterpart, Yoox.

But the fall was steeper than expected, with analysts polled by Swiss financial news agency AWP expecting the company to post a net profit of 1.3 billion euros on sales of 10.7 billion.

"The past year posed challenges for Richemont," company chairman Johann Rupert acknowledged in a statement, pointing especially to "changes in demand, which particular-

ly affected our watch businesses". The luxury watch sector has seen tough times since Chinese authorities banned giving expensive gifts as part of an anti-corruption crackdown in 2013, followed by democracy protests in 2014 hitting sales in Hong Kong.

Faced with dwindling demand, Richemont has cut staff and also repurchased inventory from shops to help them remove models struggling to find buyers from display cases and make room for new collections. The company, which owns top global

brands such as Jaeger LeCoultre, Van Cleef & Arpels and IWC, saw its watch sales slump 11 percent during the past fiscal year, which ended on March 31.

Its operating margin meanwhile was more than halved to 7.8 percent due to its repurchasing of inventory and efforts to scale back its production capacity. Following the announcement, Richemont saw its share price drop 4.15 percent to 81.75 Swiss francs a piece in early afternoon trading, as the Swiss stock exchange's main SMI index inched up 0.23 percent. —AFP

UK START-UP IMPROBABLE BREAKS \$1BN VALUATION WITH SOFTBANK DEAL

LONDON: Improbable, a British tech simulation company dreamt up at Cambridge University, has raised \$502 million in a funding round led by Japan's SoftBank, valuing it at over \$1 billion and propelling it into the top ranks of the European industry. Britain has a thriving tech start-up scene but few companies secure the large investments they need to become fully-fledged businesses, meaning many list in the United States or sell out to American giants such as Google or Microsoft.

Improbable was founded only five years ago by three friends, two of whom met while studying computer science at Cambridge and the other who went to Imperial College in London. It uses cloud-based computing to digitally simulate complex real-world locations. The software can be used in hyper-realistic gaming but also to design infrastructure and scenarios for self-driving vehicles.

"This is only just the beginning of where we need to go," 29-year-old Improbable CEO Herman Narula told Reuters. The \$502 million marks the biggest ever early stage investment for a venture-backed European company and comes from SoftBank CEO Masayoshi Son who is building a \$100 billion tech fund in his drive to become the Warren Buffett of the industry.

SoftBank bought Britain's largest tech company ARM for 24.3 billion pounds last year, its largest takeover. Narula and his co-founders have not disclosed how much their own share of the company is now worth but will be sitting on fortunes—at least on paper.

The computer science graduate founded Improbable with fellow Cambridge student Rob Whitehead, 26, after they met at a dissertation review. They later moved to London and joined forces with Goldman Sachs employee Peter Lipka, 28 who had studied for a masters in engineering in computing at Imperial.

Building up the business

Employing nearly 200 people, Improbable distributes computing power across thousands of servers to create highly detailed digital models, functioning like a vast supercomputer. The size of the investment puts it on a par with the few world renowned tech startups to come out of Europe in recent years, including Skype and Spotify, and will help the company to invest in the platform and recruit more staff.

The investment gives SoftBank a non-controlling stake and a seat on the board for Deep Nishar, its managing director. "Along with Machine Learning and Internet of Things, Improbable's distributed computation technology represents a critical next frontier in computing," he said.

Martin Garner, SVP at market research group CCS Insight, said Improbable now needed lots of developers using the platform to build momentum. It could then become attractive for a wider set of applications and users, such as city planners, electricity grid owners or transport systems to map designs.

"That is the prize," he said. "They need scale as a platform and then there is lots of potential."

Improbable's Narula said the deal showed that Britain remained an attractive destination for foreign investment, but he warned that could change if it takes the vote to leave the European Union as a reason to clamp down on immigration. —Reuters



The supply of lightly-used cars and trucks was tight because automakers had drastically cut back on bargain leases during and after the Great Recession.

US USED-CAR GLUT: IT IS A DEALER'S DREAM, AUTOMAKERS' NIGHTMARE

SLUMPING PRICES HURT AUTOMAKERS' IN-HOUSE LENDERS

ORWELL, Ohio: Three years ago if a customer walked onto Dan Reel's used car lot seeking a late-model off-lease Ford Escape, his answer was short: tough luck. The supply of lightly-used cars and trucks was tight because automakers had drastically cut back on bargain leases during and after the Great Recession.

Recently, though, a computer search for available used vehicles within 150 miles of Reel revealed an eye-popping figure: 668 Escapes. That's enough to put more than 40 percent of the inhabitants of this small northeastern Ohio town, population 1,600, into the popular crossover.

A search for the Chevrolet Equinox, a comparable crossover, showed 461 available. "The automakers have flooded the market," said Reel, owner of Reel's Auto in Orwell, Ohio, about 40 miles east of Cleveland. That deluge is good news for used-car dealers, auto auction houses and car buyers, who stand to benefit from a bountiful supply of high quality, off-lease vehicles rolling into the US market.

By the end of 2019, an estimated 12 million low-mileage vehicles are coming off leases inked during a 2014-2016 spurt in new auto sales, according to estimates by Atlanta-based auto auction firm Manheim and Reuters. That's helping independent dealers such as Reel, who can turn a quick profit on vehicles bought cheaply from auction companies.

Big players like AutoNation also aim to benefit from selling late-model vehi-

cles at a discount versus brand new cars. Chief Executive Mike Jackson said rising off-lease car numbers means "a higher supply of pre-owned vehicles at a more attractive price."

Consumers seeking great deals are in luck. Used-vehicle prices at auction fell about 3 percent last year, according to Carmel, Indiana-based KAR Auction Services Inc, which facilitated the sale of 5.1 million used and salvaged vehicles in 2016. Used prices should drop around 3 percent annually for the next couple of years, according to KAR's chief economist Tom Kontos. General Motors Co and Ford Motor Co say prices for its used vehicles, which consist largely of nearly-new ones coming off lease to consumers, fell 7 percent in the first quarter versus the same period in 2016. GM says it expects a 7 percent decline for 2017 compared to last year.

Detroit three not celebrating

While many used-car dealers and their customers are spoiled for choice, the glut bodes ill for GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV and is one reason the Detroit Three's share prices are stuck in neutral. Demand for new vehicles is slowing after seven consecutive years of rising sales. Meanwhile, carmakers' discounts on new vehicles have surpassed record levels set during the Great Recession. Those discounts have been averaging over 10 percent of a new vehicle's average selling price, according to industry consultants J.D.

Power and LMC Automotive. Slumping prices also hurt automakers' in-house lenders. They price leases using a car's "residual value" - an estimate of the vehicle's worth after its lease ends. If that value is lower than expected when the vehicle is resold, profits suffer.

That risk was highlighted last November when Ford lowered its financial service arm's pretax profit forecast by \$300 million, citing falling resale values for off-lease vehicles. Still, carmakers show no sign of abandoning leasing. In the first quarter, leases made up 31.06 percent of sales to consumers, just below the record set in the second quarter of 2016 of 31.44 percent, according to data from Experian.

Wall Street is worried carmakers are repeating past mistakes. Shares of GM and Ford barely budged last month after their earnings both beat analyst expectations. But when the companies reported disappointing April sales last week, GM's shares fell 3 percent and Ford's 4 percent.

Automakers contend there is little cause for alarm. In late April, GM chief financial officer Chuck Stevens said off-lease vehicles were "an issue," but insisted that "overall the used-car market is absorbing that supply."

Others see it differently. KAR CEO Jim Hallett said there's now an oversupply of off-lease vehicles. "The flood of lease cars puts a lot of pressure on automakers and their dealers to get new cars sold," he said. —Reuters

TOTAL'S PLANS FOR BRAZIL'S NEW OIL FRONTIER SNAGGED ON AMAZON REEF

OIAPOQUE, Brazil: Deep beneath the waters of the Atlantic off Brazil's most northern coast, French major Total SA is hunting for what it hopes will be Latin America's next big oil discovery. Metal drill bits, pipes and containers filled with equipment sit in the tropical port of Belem, near the mouth of the vast Amazon River, ready to sink the first exploratory wells 120 km (75 miles) offshore. Some geologists say the area, known as the Foz do Amazonas Basin, may contain as many as 14 billion barrels of petroleum, more than the entire proven reserves of Mexico.

But another underwater discovery threatens to derail Total's plans: A massive system of coral reefs just 28 kilometers from where the French firm and its partners, Britain's BP PLC and Brazilian state oil company Petroleo Brasileiro SA, plan to drill.

Brazilian scientists had suspected since the 1970s that the area might be home to a sizeable reef. But the unusual depth of this formation - reaching more than 100 meters (400 ft) - coupled with the Amazon silt clouding the waters, delayed that confirmation until just five years ago, just as the government was putting drilling leases out for tender.

Environmentalists, led by campaigner Greenpeace, are now pressuring regulators to block oil exploration in the area. They believe the thriving reef system, which is more 1,000 kilometers long and dotted with brightly colored coral and giant sponges, may be home to new marine species. Scientists fear an oil spill could damage this treasure before it has even been studied. Leaked crude from Foz do Amazonas wells could also potentially wreak havoc on Brazil's far north Amap state, home to the world's largest belt of mangroves and thousands of square miles of virgin rainforest, says environmental scientist Valdenira Ferreira.

"In terms of environmentally sensitive environments, this is the biggest in Brazil," said Ferreira, a researcher at the Institute for Scientific Research of Amap, who is helping prepare a study for the nation's Environment Ministry. Total says it is scrupulously complying with all requirements by Brazilian authorities and is taking every precaution to ensure that drilling would be safe.

The dispute highlights pressures facing Brazil to protect its unique environmental patrimony as it tries to foment jobs and economic growth for its citizens.

It is also reviving concerns that Brazil, which ranks among the Western hemisphere's least open economies, remains a difficult place to do business despite a new conservative government's efforts to cut red tape and woo foreign investment as it seeks to drag the economy out of the worst downturn since the Great Depression. Four years after Total and its partners paid 622 million reais (\$196 million) for five exploration blocks, they are still waiting for the go-ahead from Brazil's environmental regulator, Ibama. The agency has given no indication as to when it will make a ruling.

"It's an area that is very sensitive. We're concerned about everything there," said Alexandre Souza, environmental analyst for Ibama. The delay has Total's Chief Executive in Brazil, Maxime Rabilloud, suggesting the company might sit out three offshore oil license rounds that Brazil has scheduled for this year.

He said Total had already invested some 200 million reais (\$64 million) in developing its fields in Foz do Amazonas, with no guarantee yet that it will be able to proceed. "It's complicated to ask for more money to enter into more exploration blocks without clarity



about when the earlier blocks can be evaluated to see if they have any oil," he said in his office in Rio de Janeiro in March.

Such uncertainty could prove damaging for Brazil in a year when oil companies have 25 auctions to choose from around the world, says Antonio Guimaraes, executive secretary of exploration and production at the Brazilian Petroleum Institute (IBP), an industry group. He has urged President Michel Temer's government to speed passage of legislation currently pending in Congress that would make it easier for companies to win environmental licenses, an effort that has alarmed environmentalists.

Deepsea drilling

Deep-water discoveries during the 2000s off the coast of Rio de Janeiro in an area known as the pre-salt made Brazil one of the oil sector's hottest destinations, prompting then-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to declare "God is Brazilian". The announcement of the massive Libra offshore prospect in 2010 - the world's biggest in decades - heightened the excitement around the area.

Today, the pre-salt region accounts for almost half of Brazil's oil production, and is rising fast. Success there has piqued interest in other offshore regions of Brazil, including Foz de Amazonas. The basin was the most hotly disputed area of Brazil's 2013 oil auction. In addition to Total and BP, Brazil's OGX and Queiroz Galvao Exploration and Production (QGEP) secured blocks in the area.

Helping fuel optimism was a May 2015 offshore discovery by ExxonMobil in nearby Guyana in an area with similar geology. "I would say in terms of the opening of a new frontier in Brazil, the Amazon Basin is a strong candidate," said geologist Pedro Zalan, who did exploration work for Petrobras in the area.

Total, which said it hopes to receive a decision from Ibama this year, plans to drill nine exploratory wells at water depths of more than 1,900 meters. Environmentalists say such extreme depths bring greater risks, making it harder to plug and contain any spill. BP's 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the worst in U.S. waters, was from a deep-water well of similar depth. In a 64-page document submitted to Ibama, reviewed by Reuters, Total said the environmental risks were fully understood. "We are very aware of the sensitivity of the ecosystems," Rabilloud said. He said the com-

cluded that ocean currents would carry any pollution away from the coast of Brazil.

Rabilloud expressed confidence in receiving a green light from Ibama but said the uncertainty over the delay made operations difficult. "Right now, Total is ready to invest," he said. "Now, if you ask me when I will get the license, I can't tell you."

Fishing and unemployment

President Temer's government has proposed plans to simplify environmental licensing and hand companies a greater say in a bid to avoid lengthy delays. The Ibama environmental agency has also seen its budget slashed as the government scrambles to curb a massive deficit. Packed with members of the farming and business lobby, the government has been accused of downplaying environmental damage, including rising levels of deforestation.

The government denies neglecting environmental rules or planning to dilute them. It says, however, its top priority is creating jobs and bringing an end to Brazil's harshest recession in decades. In Amap, the Brazilian state with the highest rate of unemployment last year, many residents are eager for potential benefits from the oil industry.

However, in the remote town of Oiapoque near the border of French Guiana, many suspect that will pass them by. Fishermen in the poor town fear the oil industry may instead hurt their livelihoods. — Reuters

LOSSES AT JC PENNEY DOUBLE, SALES SLIDE, AS DO SHARES

PLANO, Texas: Losses at JC Penney doubled in the first quarter and sales at established stores fell again, capping a terrible week for retailers. Though the loss wasn't as bad as many industry analysts had expected, the decline in revenue and sales at stores open at least a year, a key industry metric, fell for the third consecutive quarter.

Shares of other retailers, which took a huge hit Thursday after dismal reports from Macy's and Nordstrom, began to decline again after stabilizing overnight. JC Penney tumbled more than 9 percent Friday in pre-market trading. For the three months ended April 29, Penney lost \$180 million, or 58 cents per share. A year ago the Plano, Texas, company lost \$68 million, or 22 cents per share. Stripping out certain items, earnings were 6 cents per share. Analysts polled by Zacks Investment Research were calling for a loss of 22 cents per share.

Penney's revenue declined from \$2.81

billion, to \$2.71 billion, which was worse than Wall Street had expected. Sales at stores open at least a year dropped 3.5 percent. Analysts watch that figure closely as a signal of a retailer's health because it excludes the volatility of stores that were recently opened or closed.

This week, Macy's, Nordstrom and Kohl's posted fading same-store sales numbers as well. In addition to trying to chase shoppers who have migrated on line, like all retailers must do, JC Penney has been forced to recover from a catastrophic transformation under a one-time Apple executive. Marvin Ellison took over as CEO in 2015. He has brought major appliances like washing machines back to the stores and is quickly expanding the number of Sephora beauty shops in its stores. JC Penney is also trying to modernize, equipping its workers with mobile devices to help online shoppers pick up orders in the store. — Reuters



In this file photo, shoppers exit a J C Penney store in the Georgia Square Mall in Athens, Ga. JC Penney Company Inc reports earnings yesterday. —AP

OECD CHIEF: TAX TREATY WILL ENSURE BIG FIRMS PAY THEIR DUES

BARI, Italy: The head of an international organization representing many of the globe's advanced economies says that a new, multinational tax treaty will be of "massive consequence" in preventing big companies from avoiding taxes. Angel Gurría, secretary-general of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, says the multilateral tax treaty negotiated among 100 countries will make it harder for multinationals to shift profits to low-tax countries. Many of those countries are expected to sign the final deal in Paris on June 7.

The aim of the treaty is "helping countries collect what we believe is a fair share," Gurría told The Associated Press yesterday on the sidelines

of a meeting of finance officials from the Group of 7 nations. "Everybody should contribute in order to run our economies, in order to deliver health, in order to deliver education, infrastructure, housing, water," Gurría said.

He said governments cannot rely on taxes from ordinary people or small businesses that can't move their income among countries. It "politically became impossible to sustain" the perception that workers are being taxed "and the big guys, the multinationals are not paying their fair share," he said.

The treaty means that countries are spared having to rewrite more than 2,000 country-to-country tax treaties. Negotiations were completed

in November 2016. The treaty is part of the OECD's effort to crack down on a practice that multinational companies developed over decades to exploit loopholes between different countries' tax laws. Political pressure to restrict the practice grew after the financial crisis hit government finances.

The US is not expected to be among the countries signing. OECD officials say US tax treaties with other countries already contain the multilateral deal's principles. The OECD's 35 members include advanced economies such as the United States and Western European and Nordic countries as well as emerging economies such as Mexico, Chile and Turkey. —AP

US RETAIL SALES RISE BROADLY; CONSUMER PRICES REBOUND

CPI RISES 0.2%, UP 2.2% YEAR ON YEAR

WASHINGTON: US retail sales increased broadly in April while consumer prices rebounded, pointing to an acceleration in economic growth and steadily rising inflation that could keep the Federal Reserve on track to raise interest rates next month.

The reports yesterday added to data on the labor market in suggesting that economic activity picked up at the start of the second quarter after almost stalling in the first three months of the year.

The Commerce Department said retail sales rose 0.4 percent last month after an upwardly revised 0.1 percent gain in March. Sales rose 4.5 percent

slightly added to losses. The dollar was weaker against a basket of currencies. Fed funds futures show traders see a 78.5 percent chance of a rate hike at the Fed's June 13-14 policy meeting. But the likelihood that the US central bank will raise rates twice before the end of the year fell after Friday's data.

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, increased at a 0.3 percent annualized rate in the first quarter, the weakest pace since the fourth quarter of 2009. That contributed to holding down first-quarter GDP growth to a 0.7 percent rate.

In a separate report yesterday, the

after falling 6.2 percent in March. Food prices rose 0.2 percent, with the cost of food consumed at home increasing 0.2 percent amid a surge in prices of fresh vegetables.

The so-called core CPI, which strips out food and energy costs, edged up 0.1 percent last month, reversing March's 0.1 percent dip. The monthly core CPI was restrained by declines in the prices of wireless phone services, medical care, motor vehicles and apparel.

Tightening labor market

In April, rental costs increased 0.3 percent after a similar gain in March. Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence rose 0.2 percent, matching March's increase. Signs of firming economic growth could bolster expectations of a Fed rate hike next month. Consumer spending is being supported by a tightening labor market, marked by an unemployment rate at a 10-year low of 4.4 percent.

The core CPI increased 1.9 percent year-on-year, the smallest gain since October 2015, after rising 2.0 percent in March. Still, April's increase was above the 1.8 percent average annual increase over the past decade. Motor vehicle sales increased 0.7 percent in April after declining 0.5 percent in March. Sales at building material stores rebounded 1.2 percent last month after slumping 1.7 percent in March. Receipts at electronics and appliance stores increased 1.3 percent, adding to March's 2.2 percent jump.

But sales at clothing stores fell 0.5 percent. Department store retailers have been hurt by declining traffic in shopping malls and increased competition from online retailers, led by Amazon.com.

Retail giant Macy's Inc on Thursday reported a 4.6 percent drop in sales in the first quarter.

Sales at online retailers jumped 1.4 percent in April. Receipts at restaurants and bars gained 0.4 percent while sales at sporting goods and hobby stores accelerated by 0.6 percent. —Reuters

US TREASURY CHIEF TO BRIEF ALLIES ON TRUMP POLICIES

BARI, Italy: Top finance officials from seven advanced economies have gathered to hear more about US President Donald Trump's economic policies on taxation and trade as well as to look for ways to promote growth, combat terrorist financing and stop tax avoidance by major corporations.

The meeting of the Group of 7 finance ministers in the southern Italian seaside town of Bari kicked off yesterday with a discussion with economists on how to make growth benefit more people. US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin was due to explain Trump's plans to cut business taxes and regulation, as well as the president's push for what he considers more balanced trading relationships. He was to meet separately Friday with Germany's finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, and then with Japan's deputy prime minister and finance minister Taro Aso.

The group is gathering with the global economy showing steady growth. There are concerns that the economy has not reached the levels seen before the global financial crisis, and that labor productivity continues to lag. Increasing output per worker is key to generating growth, and economists say it may be held back by businesses' reluctance to invest in plants and equipment due to lingering fear from the Great Recession, as well as uncertainty about new regulations.

In theory, corporate tax cuts and deregulation along the lines proposed by Trump could address some of those problems in the world's largest economy. But the details, and to what extent those policies will be implemented, remain unclear. During his presidential campaign, Trump repeatedly charged that past administrations had failed to take a tough stand on enforcing trade agreements and this failure had cost millions of good-paying factory jobs and resulted in an enormous US trade deficit. Since taking office, his administration has issued a report that names two G7 countries, Germany and Japan, for special monitoring because of their large trade surpluses with the US and has sparked a trade battle with Canada, another G7 country, by imposing higher tariffs on imports of Canadian softwood lumber.

Mnuchin said a trade deal announced yesterday with China showed the success of the Trump administration's trade approach. "We are excited about US trade policies and I think you probably saw last night we made an announcement on a hundred day economic plan with the Chinese," he said as he headed into the meeting in the town's 13th-Century fortress. "We are very happy on how we are proceeding on trade."

The deal would allow US companies to ship liquefied natural gas to China and tackles a range of long-standing barriers, ending a ban on imports of US beef and moving a step closer to allowing Chinese poultry on American supermarket shelves. It covers a range of long-standing barriers from agriculture to energy to the operation of American financial firms in China. The Italian hosts say the meeting themes will include making economic growth benefit more people; coordination among international financial organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; and efforts to stop companies from dodging taxes by moving income across borders. —AP



FLORIDA: In this Wednesday, April 26, 2017, photo, window shoppers look into a store on Miami Beach, Florida's Lincoln Road. Yesterday, the Commerce Department releases US retail sales data for April. —AP

in April on a year-on-year basis. Economists had forecast overall retail sales increasing 0.6 percent last month. Excluding automobiles, gasoline, building materials and food services, retail sales gained 0.2 percent after advancing 0.7 percent in March.

These so-called core retail sales correspond most closely with the consumer spending component of gross domestic product. Prices of US Treasuries extended gains after the data, while US stock index futures

Labor Department said its Consumer Price Index rose 0.2 percent after dropping 0.3 percent in March. The rise in prices suggested that March's drop, which was the first in 13 months, was an aberration.

In the 12 months through April, the CPI increased 2.2 percent. While that was a slowdown from March's 2.4 percent increase, it still exceeded the 1.7 percent average annual increase over the past 10 years. Gasoline prices jumped 1.2 percent

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Rihanna arrives at the Dior Cruise Show at the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve on Thursday, May 11, 2017, in Calabasas, Calif. — AP

Dior displays cruise collection

See Page 26, 27



Cashier Rosemarie O'Connor waves a customer as she stands below a sign advertising toasted chile-lime grasshoppers before a baseball game between the Seattle Mariners and the Los Angeles Angels. — AP photos



Toasted chile-lime grasshoppers are displayed on a menu at a baseball game between the Seattle Mariners and the Los Angeles Angels in Seattle.

Grasshoppers, cookie dough; the new hits on MLB menus

The idea of serving edible grasshoppers at a baseball game isn't as crazy as it sounds. The Seattle Mariners brought that curious offering to their ballpark this season, and although it might have seemed like a head scratcher to many fans and foodies, this crispy snack was more than just a quirky attention grabber. "This is like an authentic local delicacy," said Diana Evans, a vice president of strategy and marketing for Centerplate, the Mariners' hospitality partner. "We're thrilled that people are excited about it."

The chapulines - toasted grasshoppers with chili-lime salt seasoning - arrived at Safeco Field this season courtesy of Poquitos, a Mexican restaurant in Seattle that serves them. For those fans who could wrap their minds (and mouths) around the idea of eating insects, the item proved quite popular, selling out during the opening home series. In an era when ballparks are constantly trying to add new features and attractions, spicing up the menu can be an easy way to enhance the experience for spectators.

There will always be room for hot dogs, popcorn and peanuts, but Seattle's experience with the chapulines shows how a creative new food offering can become the talk of baseball for a little while - and any team can pull it off. "Much like teams will use the offseason to make a big splash with a free agent signing or renovation ... from a food and beverage standpoint, we'll use the offseason to evaluate our menus and develop new offerings as well," said David Freireich, a spokesperson for Aramark, which provides food and beverage services at eight ballparks.

Although fancier food items can create some buzz at the ballpark, there are constraints. Fans do still want to watch the game, so a dish might not work if it's hard to eat or takes a long time to make. The chapulines, on the other hand, can be eaten like just another ballpark snack. "Making sure that it's something that you can walk around with, making sure that you don't miss too much of the game while

you're waiting for it - and having it be both enjoyable and easy to eat," Evans said. "That is, right there, our sweet spot." Here are some more exotic culinary offerings from around baseball this season:

APPLE PIE NACHOS (ROCKIES)

Aramark offers this sweet snack at Coors Field - cinnamon sugar chips topped with apple pie filling, cheddar cheese, whipped cream and caramel.

CHURRO DOG 2.0 (DIAMONDBACKS)

The Diamondbacks unveiled their original Churro Dog a couple years ago - a churro inside a Long John doughnut, topped with frozen yogurt, whipped cream and chocolate sauce. The new version at Chase Field features Oreo cookie crumbs and strawberry topping.

CRABMEAT PORK RIND CHIPPER (ORIOLES)

In an area famous for its crabs, Oriole Park at Camden Yards offers pork rinds topped with cheese sauce, crab meat, Old Bay and scallions.

DODGER BURGER (DODGERS)

Dodger Stadium was already famous for its Dodger Dogs. Now you can order a burger that includes a grilled Dodger Dog on top.

FALAFEL SANDWICH (PHILLIES)

New at Citizens Bank Park, this sandwich includes house-made pita, lettuce, English cucumber, bell peppers, tomatoes and sesame mint yogurt sauce.

GRILLI CHEESE (BLUE JAYS)

Toronto reliever Jason Grilli has embraced the nickname "Grill

Cheese" - and he designed the Grilli Cheese sandwich at Rogers Centre, with a portion of the proceeds going to Jays Care Foundation.

"Sometimes, simple is best. You don't need to think too far outside the box to come up with an idea that really captures the imagination of the fans," Freireich said.

MOST VALUABLE TAMALES (RANGERS)

A few years ago, the Rangers began selling a Texas-sized hot dog that came on 2 feet of bun. Globe Life Park is now home to the M.V.T., which features the 2-foot hot dog stuffed in a tamale and covered in Texas Chili, nacho cheese and sour cream.

PULLED PORK PATTY MELT (ROYALS)

Kansas City shows off its barbecue prowess at Kauffman Stadium with this pulled pork item that includes onions, cheese, bacon and jalapenos. The bun is made of funnel cake. "While it may seem a little exotic, if you will, the truth is that the flavors really work well with one another," Freireich said. "From the sweet and savory aspect of things, there might be skepticism on the part of fans, but moreso than not, the reaction is very favorable and positive."

RAW COOKIE DOUGH (METS)

DO Cookie Dough Confections, a New York City cookie dough shop that's been all the rage recently, has an outlet at Citi Field.

SLOPPY KO (TWINS)

Target Field has introduced this flatbread sandwich with Korean-style barbecue beef topped with kimchi and a boiled egg. It's sold at a concession stand named for Andrew Zimmern of "Bizarre Foods" fame. — AP

Flame it on the sunshine: Thai solar chicken a hot hit

Not many chefs don a welding mask before they enter the kitchen, but Sila Sutharat prefers to cook his chicken sunny side up. Two hours south of Bangkok this 60-year-old roadside vendor has found an ingenious way to offer his customers something a little different by harnessing the power of the sun. Using a large wall of nearly 1,000 moveable mirrors-a device he designed and built himself-he focuses the sun's rays onto a row of marinated chickens, sizzling away under the intense heat.

His unusual culinary methods raised a few eyebrows when he first hit upon the idea. "They said that I'd gone mad, that cooking chicken like this was impossible," he told AFP next to his stall, the row of sun-drenched chickens behind him too bright to look at for any length of time. "After a long time passed by, they'd say: 'Actually, you could do it,'" he added. That's because the solar reflector generates intense heat, easily enough to match an oven, with a sunshine-baked chicken taking just twelve minutes to cook through. For much of the last 20 years Sila grilled in relative obscurity for a fairly local crowd. But after videos of his solar-cooker went viral online, people from across Thailand have flocked to his stall in Phetchaburi province.

Daylight saving

Sila says the idea came to him in 1997 when he was struck by the heat reflecting off a passing bus. "I thought, with this heat reflecting from the window from the sun, I could possibly change it into energy," he said. Sila says that compared to a traditional charcoal grill-which he used before his solar epiphany-his meat is more tender and evenly-cooked. And given Thailand's sweltering tropical climate, the sun is a free, clean and totally sustainable energy source.

"At the time, energy such as petrol and gas was becoming more expensive and suppliers were also running out of wood to sell," he recalled. "I thought if I used solar energy, I could save a lot. And it also decreases pollution." Sila and his wife Pansri now cook around 40 chickens-as well as several sides of meat-each day. "We've been eating here for a long time," said regular patron Thanyarat Kaewpaleuk, who was tucking into lunch with her husband. "It's delicious. His chicken is fatty, it's not burned and doesn't smell like a charcoal grill, which you can smell on the meat." — AFP



Mali Pansari prepares garnishes as solar-cooked chicken is displayed on their counter at their eatery in Phetchaburi province, south of Bangkok. — AFP

It's a rap: Eminem lawsuit against New Zealand political party ends

Turn up the volume, the judge told the lawyers in a case involving an Eminem song: "I'm not shy of loud music." It was one of many incongruous moments during a two-week trial that ended yesterday at the High Court in Wellington. The judge may not rule for months in the case in which music publishers for the Detroit rapper are suing New Zealand's ruling conservative political party for copyright infringement. The judge and phalanx of gowned lawyers listened studiously to plenty of profanity-laced rap. They also listened for similarities between such classic songs as "La Bamba" and "Twist and Shout."



Avi Issacharoff, one of the co-authors of the Israeli TV drama 'Fauda', or chaos in Arabic, poses for a photograph in the Israeli city of Tel Aviv-Yaffo. — AFP

At issue is the National Party's use of the song "Eminem Esque" in a 2014 television campaign ad that was run 186 times before it was pulled off the air. Eminem's publishers Eight Mile Style say the track is a rip-off of the rapper's acclaimed 2002 song "Lose Yourself," while the party says the song was inspired by the rapper's hit but is different. National Party lawyer Greg

Arthur said there wasn't much originality in the music behind "Lose Yourself" and the industry practice of making so-called "sound-alike" songs that were different enough to avoid copyright issues was well-established.

But Judge Helen Cull made some pointed observations during Arthur's summing up. She said when the two songs were overlaid, they kept the same beat and pattern, and sounded almost "contemporaneous." "It doesn't make it legitimate because somebody hasn't yet sued," the judge said. "It's a question of whether it is so alike that a sound-alike is crossing the line and becomes copyright infringement."

Arthur replied that some songs might cross the line but that didn't make the entire sound-alike industry illegitimate. And he said that using the title "Eminem Esque" shouldn't be a factor to consider. "It's a little clue, though, isn't it?" Cull responded. She appeared to pay close attention to the music, at one point telling the lawyers they could make it louder the following day. During the case, two musicologists gave differing opinions on whether the song used in the ad was a copy.

The campaign manager for the National Party said she'd sought and received assurances from music and advertising experts that using "Eminem Esque" would be acceptable because it was part of a licensed music library and was free from any copyright issues. But Eight Mile Style lawyer Garry Williams said it was "utterly clear" the party knew it was infringing upon a copyrighted song.

Another unusual moment in the case came when Jeff Bass, the Detroit-area composer of the opening guitar riff in "Lose Yourself," picked up an acoustic guitar and played the riff for the court. Bass said the soundtrack for the ad was a "blatant rip-off" of the song he co-wrote with Eminem and Luis Resto over 18 months. —AP

Shakira plans new album this month

Shakira announced Thursday that she will release a new album later this month after the superstar sported a reggaeton sound on her first single. Shakira, one of the top-selling Latin artists of all time, told her nearly 45 million Twitter followers that her 11th studio album, "El Dorado," will come out on May 26. The album's title refers to the mythical city of riches which Spanish explorers sought in her native Colombia. The cover art of "El Dorado," however, is somber with Shakira's face peeking out of an off-white background.

To preview the album, Shakira last year released the single "Chantaje," which means "Blackmail," a playful duet about temptation and desire with Colombian reggaeton singer Maluma. The video, in which the pink-haired Shakira and Maluma dance flirtatiously through a secret club hidden in an Indian grocery store, was the fastest Spanish-language piece to generate 100 million views on hosting site Vevo. Shakira last month followed up with a second track, "Me Enamore" ("I Fell In Love"), which has touches of reggaeton rhythms as she sings of her relationship with Spanish footballer Gerard Pique.



Singer/actress Shakira attends the Disney Premiere of Zootopia in Hollywood, California.



Avi Issacharoff, one of the co-authors of the Israeli TV drama 'Fauda', or chaos in Arabic, poses for a photograph in the Israeli city of Tel Aviv-Yaffo. — AFP

TV SERIES PUTS HUMAN FACES ON ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Hisham Suleiman now hears calls of "Abu Ahmad" when walking down the street—a sign of the popularity of a television drama that dares to present a complex view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The show "Fauda," or chaos in Arabic, sees Arab Israeli actor Suleiman portray Abu Ahmad, a Hamas militant being pursued by an Israeli undercover unit. Its first season captivated viewers by showing the more human aspects of characters often portrayed in black and white, while at the same time keeping them on edge with tense storylines.

It is the first Israeli television show in both Hebrew and Arabic. A second season is now in preparation, and Netflix has also picked it up, with the first season available with English subtitles and dubbing. Avi Issacharoff, co-creator of the show and who for years covered the Palestinian territories as a journalist, said: "We tried to show both sides of the story." "We wanted to show that even the bad guys are very different from what the average Israeli thinks." The series follows Doron, a retired member of the undercover Israeli unit who breaks with the peaceful family life he had transitioned into and rejoins the fight at the request of his former chief.

Suleiman's character—the member of the Palestinian Islamist movement—is behind a series of suicide attacks that killed more than 100 Israelis. Doron thought he had killed him, but it turns out he is still alive, so the former agent returns to finish the job. The 12 episodes of the first season depict the pursuit that follows, with the story portrayed in meticulously constructed scenes reflective of the daily lives of Israelis and Palestinians. That includes pervasive security constraints, attacks and nighttime raids by the Israeli army in Palestinian territory.

'Honest and nuanced'

Two-thirds of the show is in Arabic, with the characters played by Jewish and Arab Israelis. In 2016, it won six Ophir prizes awarded by the Israeli Academy of Film and Television, including best dramatic series. It has also gained fans globally both due to its availability on Netflix and its appearance at international festivals. American writer Stephen King has been among the fans praising it.

Issacharoff said it was difficult at first to garner interest in the show. "At first, everyone said 'no' because it was too expensive due to numerous action scenes and because everybody here is tired of the subject," he said, referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The power of the series comes across in its realism. While "Fauda" was written for an Israeli audience and Hamas can be seen as the "bad guys", all characters are portrayed with a rare complexity. "The way in which the screenwriters have illustrated the conflict is very fair, honest and nuanced," said Einav Schiff, television critic for Israeli paper Yediot Aharonot.

In one episode, Amal, a young Palestinian woman whose fiancé was killed at their wedding ceremony by a member of the Israeli undercover unit, decides to take revenge. She brings a bomb in an Israeli bar where the girlfriend of one of the Israeli agents works. Inside the bar, while holding the bag with the bomb inside, Amal hesitates, her eyes darting, seemingly staggered by the kindness of the waitress, the agent's girlfriend, who asks if something is wrong. A harrowing scene then follows.

'A kind of catharsis'

Suleiman, who comes from the northern Israeli city of Nazareth and, like many Arab Israelis, sees himself as a Palestinian, said he appreciated that the show's creators allowed him to play a Hamas member more complex than the typical "violent and macho" portrayal. He says he has been inundated with messages from fans from a range of backgrounds. "Jews, Christian and Muslim Arabs, people from the left and right, even settlers from Kiryat Arba," he said, referring to a hardline Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank. Suleiman says that the show's blurring of lines is another sign that the conflict may not be as intractable as it seems. Issacharoff called it "a kind of catharsis for all post-traumatic Israelis and Palestinians". "It gives them the possibility to be both inside, since it is their story, and outside at the same time, since it is only a series to look at reality in a detached way," he said. — AFP

Egypt's ballet dancers find



Egyptian ballet dancer Mohammed Hamed (center) performs during 'Zorba' at the Cairo Opera House, in Egypt.



Ballet dancer Fady El-Nabarawy and his Serbian fiancée, ballerina Kristina Lazovic, pose for a photograph at his home on the top floor of a six-story walk-up in the Omraniyah district of Cairo, Egypt.



Egyptian ballet dancer Ahmed Nabil (left) performs 'Zorba' at the Cairo Opera House. — AP photos

Ballet dancer Fady el-Nabarawy feels he can finally breathe again the moment he enters the gates of the Cairo Opera House after a commute from his ramshackle, poor neighborhood. This is where he and his fellow dancers practice, perform, love and create. "Every day, I cannot wait to come here. My oxygen is here," he said. Ballet is in its own bubble in Egypt, removed from the surrounding society. The elite Western art form is far from Egypt's own rich traditions of classical Arabic music and dance, let alone the electro-beat sweeping the Arabic pop music scene.

The country has grown more conservative, and in the eyes of some Muslims, ballet is outright "nudity." Social pressure to conform is overpowering, so the idea of someone dancing on stage in tights strikes many Egyptians as just plain odd. Still, the young men who found their passion dancing ballet are hardly isolated elites. They're firmly rooted in the middle and lower-middle classes, managing to carve out their own Bohemian zone of diversity and creativity.

Ballet's audience in Egypt may be limited, but it's enthusiastic. On a recent night at the Opera House, located on an upscale residential island in the Nile River, the Cairo Ballet Company brought a packed house to its feet with a rousing performance of "Zorba," a ballet based on the same novel as the movie "Zorba the Greek." The audience - men mainly in suits, women in evening gowns, many wearing Muslim headscarves - cheered a dazzling finale by the two leads. Ahmed Nabil, tall and slender, leaped in classical routines while Hani Hassan, playing Zorba, mixed in the machismo of traditional Greek dance, slapping his thighs and kicking up his heels. Hassan blew kisses to the crowd and led them in clapping to the music.

The ovations pulled them out for three

encores. Afterward, people swarmed to congratulate Nabil and his wife and fellow dancer, Italian ballerina Alice De Nardi. "And to think my parents wanted me to drop out of ballet school," Nabil said. In the 60-member, state-funded company, almost all the ballerinas are foreigners, coming from Serbia, Italy, Japan, Ukraine and Greece, with only a handful of Egyptians. The male dancers, in contrast, are almost all Egyptian.

From childhood, the male dancers learned to keep ballet a secret. It was the best way to avoid mockery, bigotry, innuendos about their sexual orientation or just ignorant curiosity - constant questions like "Can you walk on your toes?" or "Do you wear tights?" Hassan told people he did gymnastics when they asked why he was getting so muscular. "When I read music on the metro and some guy asks me what I'm doing, I tell him I'm with the conservatory," said el-Nabarawy.

El-Nabarawy came to ballet because of a moment of despair as a 7-year-old. He was a reclusive child, and his teachers often yelled at him and hit him. So one day he skipped school and hid all morning behind a parked car near his home. When his mother found out, she promised to move him to another school the next year. His father saw an ad for the arts academy. Its main attraction was that it was near their home. El-Nabarawy applied to the conservatory and failed, but then was accepted in ballet.

His mother wondered if that was more suitable for girls, but in the end didn't object. "I became a ballet dancer by chance but, glory to God, I'm told I was born to be a ballet dancer," he said. El-Nabarawy, now 29, said he's proud both of being a ballet dancer and of being from Cairo's district of Omraniyah, though it is not always easy. Once farmland on Cairo's western edges, Omraniyah is now a crowded district of shoddy, cramped concrete-and-brick apartment towers,

mostly built up illegally as migrants poured in from southern Egypt looking for jobs and a better life. Narrow streets are jammed with cars, trucks, donkey carts and motorcycle rickshaws, or tuk-tuks, often driven by children.



El-Nabarawy lives with his parents and brother on the top floor of a six-story walk-up. It looks out over a cityscape of satellite dishes, dangling wires, exposed rebar and jagged concrete. But he's hardly there. "My life now is totally divorced from Omraniyah," he said. "I just go home to sleep." Instead, his time is spent in the refuge of

Ahmed Nabil (left) Hani Hassan, practice during a rehearsal, in the Cairo Opera House, Egypt.

passion on an isolated stage

the Opera House complex. In rehearsals, as the dancers sweat and strain, it becomes clear how it's a space for some diversity. Some of the men sport a "zebiba," a bruise on the forehead from prostrating during Muslim prayers, and head out to pray during rehearsal breaks. Others have pony tails, a style that still gets disapproving looks on the streets in Egypt.



Egyptian ballet dancer Hani Hassan (right) and a foreign ballerina take a selfie during a break from rehearsals.

The male and female dancers mingle, chat and smoke together. Like his Zorba, the 39-year-old Hassan, the son of an army officer, exudes joie de vivre, flirting with ballerinas and showing off his fluency in Russian - his ex-wife was a Russian dancer. He proclaims repeatedly he's traveling soon to Spain for a guest performance, a badge of honor.

At least six of the male dancers are married to or dating foreign female dancers. It's often a lesson in broadening horizons. El-Nabarawy describes himself as a practicing Muslim - he sometimes posts religious material on Facebook - and his girlfriend, Kristina Lazovic, is a Christian Serb. El-Nabarawy grew up hearing about Serbian massacres of Bosnian Muslims during the Balkan wars in the 1990s. Now he's getting the

Serbs' side in lively discussions with Lazovic.

"I'm now convinced atrocities were committed by both sides," he said. Fellow dancer Waleed Eskaros and his fiancée, Greek ballerina Antigoni Tsiouli, are making their own cultural adjustments. Both are Christian, but he's Coptic Orthodox and she's Greek Orthodox. He wants his Church's blessing, but it won't marry them unless she converts, something she and her family refuse. So "it looks like I will marry in a Greek Orthodox church. They are more flexible."

Presiding over the rehearsals is Madame Erminia Gambarelli, the artistic director. She's the Italian widow of Abdel-Moneim Kamel, the giant of Egyptian ballet who rebuilt the company in the 1990s, mentored many of its current dancers and died in 2013. Ballet in Egypt has been immersed in politics from the start. The national company was founded by the government in 1958 as a way to strengthen the bond with Egypt's top ally at the time, the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, President Hosni Mubarak's government revived ballet as part of a more capitalist-driven prestige project, building the Opera House complex with Japanese backing.

Ballet was thrust onto the political stage after the Muslim Brotherhood came to power following the 2011 uprising that ousted Mubarak. Islamist lawmakers demanded an end to state funding for the company. One legislator denounced ballet as the "art of nakedness." Some dancers had often worried privately over whether ballet was acceptable under their faith, Eskaros said. The Islamists tipped them over the edge, and several quit, declaring it "haram," or forbidden.

Fears over the fate of ballet and other arts became a rallying point in the popular campaign against the Brotherhood. When an Islamist was named culture minister in 2013, artists and intellectuals held a monthlong protest outside the minister's office. It turned into a nightly street party of singing, poetry and dancing. Hassan, Eskaros and others in the company performed a dozen times. "I thought I'd dance on the street to let people decide for themselves whether ballet is haram or not," Hassan said.

The military ousted the Brotherhood in July 2013. Hassan remains a fierce opponent of "conservative ideologies" he says pervade the coun-

try. "People inject religion into everything ... always talking about what this sheikh said and what that sheikh said." The company is still recovering from the turmoil. Most foreign dancers fled amid the 2011 uprising. Foreign ballerinas are back, but now the company - like the rest of Egypt - struggles with austerity measures imposed by the government to repair the damaged economy.



Egyptian longtime friends and ballet co-stars Ahmed Nabil (left) Hani Hassan (center) and Mohammed Hamed, pose on stage after a performance of 'Zorba'.

Funds are tighter. After devaluations, even the best paid dancers make the equivalent of only a few hundred dollars a month. Nabil and Hassan run ballet schools, making a living and spreading the art. Others teach ballet or take up day jobs, mostly in the government. "I'm not happy with the quality of our work," said the 34-year-old Nabil. "The company is now rebuilding." Still, he said, his entire life is within the Opera House walls, where he's been coming since he was 11. "This is where I am famous. Once I go through the gate and onto the street, I cease to exist as who I am." — AP



Foreign ballerinas wait their turn to practice during a rehearsal at Egypt's Cairo Opera House.



Fady El-Nabarawy (center) practices during a rehearsal at the Cairo Opera House, Egypt.



Models walk the runway during the first cruise collection by Maria Grazia Chiuri for Dior show in the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon, Calabasas, California. — AFP photos



Dior shows cruise collection in LA

The glamour of France's fashion industry hit Los Angeles Thursday as Dior lured a bevy of stars including Charlize Theron and Rihanna to the Santa Monica mountains for its latest runway show. The couture house's 2018 cruise collection presentation saw around 800 guests decamping to a remote reserve on the edge of the upscale suburb of Calabasas, home to Jennifer Lopez, the Kardashians and much of Hollywood's A list.

Around 50 models showcased a wardrobe with a music festival vibe inspired by Lascaux cave paintings, painter Georgia O'Keeffe and feminist shamanic healer Vicki Noble, with plenty of pleated skirts and bolero hats on show. The remote location for the runway show was chosen by Maria Grazia Chiuri, who was lured from Valentino in July last year to become Dior's first female creative director of women's haute couture and accessories.

As the company celebrates its 70th anniversary, Chiuri has been introducing a more modern, rock 'n' roll look to the house's fashion offering, exemplified by her \$710 "We Should All Be Feminists" t-shirt inspired by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's essay and TEDx talk of the same name. "Christian Dior in 1947 came to Los Angeles, only two years after the war, to show his collection. So we decided on the anniversary to come back," Chiuri said.

"Normally when you think about LA, the first thing is celebrities, Hollywood, red carpets but I think there is another aspect, the natural aspect open spaces. Many people love this place-also Mr Dior-because California is in some ways a paradise." Dior took over Santa Monica seafood restaurant Gladstone's on the eve of the show for a glitzy beachside party welcoming celebrities including "Slumdog Millionaire" star Frieda Pinto, and actresses Kiernan Shipka ("Mad Men"), Jaime King ("Sin City") and Juno Temple ("Vinyl").

Femininity

"What's not to love about Dior? I can't wait to see what's going to be the concept of the new collection. I'm excited," Barbadian pop superstar Rihanna, 29, who showcased an off-the-shoulder brown fur coat, said ahead of the show. "It's always a pleasure..."



Kelly Rowland arrives at the Dior Cruise Show.



Solange Knowles performs at the after party during the first cruise collection by Maria Grazia Chiuri for Dior show in the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon, Calabasas, California.

to wear Dior. For one, it's expensive and, two, it's really well made and it's always something that helps you express your femininity in the highest level." The singer stayed for half an hour, leaving immediately after the show and leaving singing duties to Beyonce's younger sister Solange Knowles, 30, who played a rousing set at the after-show party.

Other stars at the glitzy bash included Oscar-winning "Room" and "King Kong" actress Brie Larson, Beyonce's former Destiny's Child bandmate Kelly Rowlands, singer Nick Jonas and British socialite Lady Victoria Hervey. Long derided for flashiness or faded grunge, Los Angeles is increasingly being described as an upcoming center of global fashion. Saint Laurent showcased its autumn-winter men's collection and part of its women's range in Hollywood last year while Louis Vuitton presented its cruise collection in the city and Burberry presented at the Griffith Observatory in 2015.

Guests for the Dior show boarded shuttles from Beverly Hills and Santa Monica to the wilderness of the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve, around an hour away.

'Rich with culture'

The meadows there were used from the 1920s to 1950s for filming Westerns and other movies, including "Gone with the Wind" (1939), "They Died with Their Boots On" (1941) and "Adventures of Don Juan" (1948). "I think it was beautiful. It was really inspiring and it felt rich with culture and texture and somewhat other-worldliness," said Oscar-winning South African actress Theron, 41, who currently stars in high-octane car movie "The Fate of the Furious." "It was really beautiful yet super feminine. I loved that it had some real weight to it. It felt like it was layered with many complexities. It was a really beautiful job." The show came with the Christian Dior Couture brand about to be taken over in a \$13.1 billion deal by French luxury goods conglomerate LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

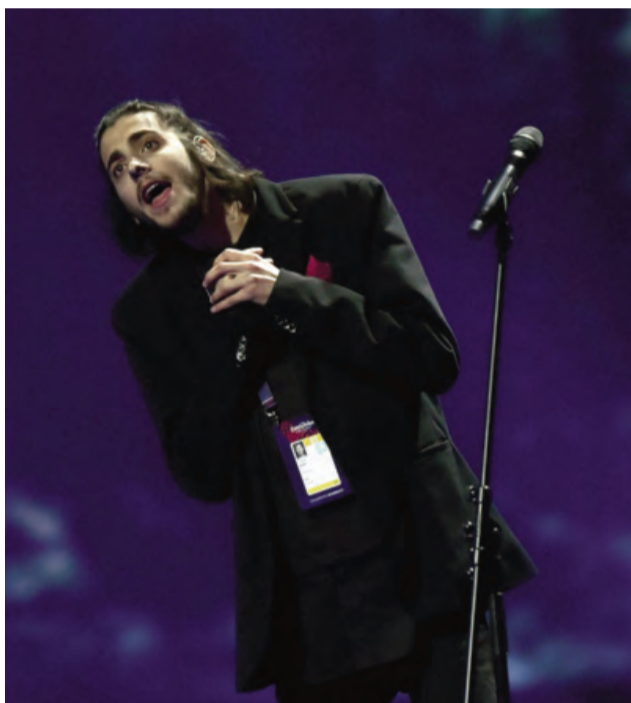
LVMH already owns Parfums Christian Dior and the transaction, set to go through in June, would simplify its relationship with the company, handing it control of the haute couture, leather, men's and women's ready-to-wear and shoe businesses. "In terms of having the plant growing, we have the roots, and we want the tree to continue growing and have nice leaves and flowers," Sidney Toledo, Dior's chief executive since 1998 said. "This is why any time, whatever we do-the collections, the presentations, the people together-has to be positive for the growth of the company, not only short term but long term." — AFP



Models walk the runway during the first cruise collection by Maria Grazia Chiuri for Dior show.



Jana Burceska from Macedonia performs the song 'Dance Alone' during rehearsals.



Portugal's Salvador Sobral performs during the first semi-final rehearsal for the Eurovision Song Contest in Kiev.



Timebelle from Switzerland performs the song 'Apollo' during rehearsals.

Portugal puts the Eurovision hopes in big-hearted crooner

A few weeks ago, Salvador Sobral, a 27-year-old crooner tipped as a favorite for today's Eurovision Song Contest, was an unknown artist waiting for a heart transplant. But with his intimate rendering of the melancholic "Amar Pelos Dois" (For the Both of Us) written by his older sister Luisa—a success in her own right Sobral is hoping to chart an unconventional route to Eurovision gold. At first glance, his decision to forgo the elaborate choreography and heavy dance tempos favoured by most contestants would make him a long shot. Shunning English to sing in a Portuguese tremolo that reflects a severe heart condition would also seem to bode ill for the Lisbon native, whose beard and ponytail make him look more of a hipster than a budding pop star. "I don't like pointless 'fast food' music, my songs have to have meaning, I sing with my heart," he said recently.

Something to say

Sobral has become the bookmakers' top contender after the Italian Francesco Gabbani and his "dancing naked ape", and a favorite of fans, with huge crowds welcoming his arrival at the Eurovision venue in Kiev, Ukraine. "I felt as popular as Cristiano Ronaldo," said Sobral, who added that he was not making the trip only to sing. After the Eurovision semi-finals Sobral held a press conference wearing a sweatshirt calling attention to the plight of refugees. "When I learned that I was going to participate at Eurovision I first thought about the refugees, because they leave their country to escape death. These people are not just simple immigrants," he said. Sobral, for his part, cannot go anywhere for more than two weeks without his medicines, and he did not attend the rehearsals earlier this week in Kiev because of health

worries. But he plays down his heart ailment, even though he is still waiting for a transplant. "The disease is a small problem, really, certainly the only one I have in my life."

Highs and lows

Discovered in 2009 while competing in Portugal's version of "American Idol" as his sister had a few years previously—Sobral was barely 18 and had a hard time adjusting to his sudden popularity. He quit singing shortly afterwards, and in 2011 he left Portugal for Spain's Balearic Islands, where he studied psychology during an Erasmus program. It was during this time Sobral fell into heavy drug use, including regular use of psychedelic mushrooms. But he gradually cleaned himself up and started singing in the bars and hotels on Mallorca. "It was hard to sing every night until midnight, but it was worth it," he said recently. "I thought about staying on the island, but when I saw that nothing happens there in winter, I knew I had to make a decision."

So he left for Barcelona to study jazz and work on his voice, and it was in the Catalan city that he discovered Chet Baker, the trumpeter Sobral now calls his biggest musical inspiration. And as the Eurovision final approaches, Sobral says he's not nervous, displaying a confidence few would expect of a shy performer who often seems to want to apologize when appearing in front of a microphone. But the emotional force of his singing has touched a nerve in Portugal, which has never won higher than sixth place in the Eurovision contest, in 1996, since it first started competing in 1964. — AFP



Francesco Gabbani from Italy performs the song 'Occidentali's Karma' during a rehearsal for the Eurovision Song Contest, in Kiev, Ukraine yesterday. The final of The Eurovision Song Contest 2017 will be held today. — AP Photos

CROATIA'S 'MR VOICE', HUNGARIAN GYPSY SINGER AMONG THE EUROVISION FINALISTS

Croatian pop-opera, Romanian yodelling and Hungarian gypsy fusion will all feature in the final of the 2017 Eurovision song contest, after the three countries were among 10 to qualify in the second round of heats in Kiev. Forty-two countries competed in this year's Eurovision, an annual pageant of the colourful, the camp and the cheesy, but only 26 will take part in Saturday's grand final in front of a television audience of millions. In Thursday's semi-final, singer Jacques Houdek, known as 'Mr

Voice' in Croatia, won a place in the last round by melding pop and operatic singing styles in the song "My Friend". Houdek's costume was half-tuxedo, half-leather jacket - a sartorial illustration of the musical crossover.

Other performers also reached the final with untypical fusions of different musical traditions. Joci Papai, Hungary's first Roma entrant for Eurovision, performed "Origo" - a mixture of electronic beats and gypsy vocal flourishes. Romanian duo Ilinca

and Alex Florea combine rock, rap and yodelling in their song "Yodel it!". Thursday's other qualifiers for the final were Bulgaria, Belarus, Denmark, Israel, Norway, the Netherlands and Austria. Eight countries missed out on a final place, including Macedonia's Jana Burceska, but any disappointment she felt was likely eased by a surprise marriage proposal from her partner live on air. — Reuters

BASQUIAT HEADLINES NEW YORK ART AUCTION SEASON



KPAC Lalitha addresses meet the press

KSNA plans to revive Gulf chapters: Lalitha

By Sajeev K Peter

Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi (KSNA) is considering the revival of its Gulf chapters that became defunct following a change of guard in Kerala last year, said Akademi chairperson and veteran south Indian actress KPAC Lalitha. Addressing a 'Meet the Press' event organized by the Changanachery Association of Kuwait at Metro Medical Car in Farwaniya on Thursday, she said a sentiment expressed by many theatre lovers prompted the Akademi to think about reopening its chapters in the Gulf, including the one in Kuwait.

"Former Akademi Chairman Soorya Krishnamoorthy has done a lot to support Malayalam theatre and drama artists. Definitely, the Akademi will explore the possibilities of restarting the Akademi's chapters in this region," Lalitha said in response to a question.

Lalitha said there is an awakening in Malayalam theatre today with more amateur and professional troupes producing dramas and more people showing keenness to watch plays. "Akademi is also focusing more on supporting theatre and drama activists and conducting theater festivals on a regular basis," she said, referring to the recently-concluded amateur drama festival in Thiruvananthapuram. This followed the International Theatre Festival of Kerala (ITFoK), which was held in Thrissur in February by the Akademi.

"There is a perceptible change in the way how people look at actors and acting today. Theater and film actor Surabhi Lakshmy winning the national award for her stunning performance in the film 'Minnaminungu' is a good example," the veteran actress, who has bagged several awards and accolades including state and national awards over the last five decades, remarked. Surabhi also won the state amateur theatre award instituted by the Akademi for best actress for her role in the play 'Bombay Tailors', she added.

Lalitha, who has acted in more than 500 south Indian films playing a variety of roles, does not believe that there is a new genre in cinema called 'new gen movie'. "Celebrated filmmakers Bharatan, Padmarajan and John Abraham made new generation movies 25 years ago. If there is a change in the craft of acting or direction, it has come in tune with the other changes in our society including technological advancements," she pointed out.

Lalitha also applauded the humanitarian initiative undertaken by the Changanachery Association of Kuwait to support financially backward patients in Kerala. Changanassery municipal chairman Sebastian Mathew Manamel, Association President Sunil P Antony, General Secretary Ranjith Poovely, Vinod Panicker and Manju Nedikalaparambil were also present during the 'meet the press' event.

Jean-Michel Basquiat occupies star billing on the auction block in New York this season, catapulting the artist into the rostrum of 20th century greats nearly three decades after his death. Riding high on last year's \$57 million auction record set when a Japanese billionaire snapped up a self-portrait, at least 14 works by the US wonderkid of Haitian and Puerto Rican descent are on sale at Christie's and Sotheby's next week.

"He was a street artist so it took a bit of time for him to be assimilated," explains Loic Gouzer, chairman of post-war and contemporary art at Christie's. "Now every museum in the world is begging to get Basquiat." Christie's and Sotheby's-the esteemed houses founded in 18th century London-are chasing combined sales of at least \$1.1 billion when they auction hundreds of contemporary, modern and impressionist works of art from May 15-19 in New York. The top estimate for the week is a 1982 Basquiat, "Untitled"-a skull-like head on a giant canvas in oil-stick, acrylic and spray paint, for which Sotheby's hopes to smash a new record at more than \$60 million. It has been held by its current owners ever since being bought in 1984 at Christie's for \$19,000.

The Brooklyn-born artist died of an overdose aged 27. Artprice says the value of Basquiat works rose 506 percent from January 2000 to October 2016. "It's the golden kid, it's the one that died young, lived strong and has been creating a body of work that looks like nothing before and looks like nothing after," says Gregoire Billault, Sotheby's head of contemporary art. An African American in a white art world, much of his work focused on ordeals endured by blacks-a subject of renewed resonance in the wake of nationwide US protests since 2014 about the shootings of unarmed black men by police.

\$50 million Bacon

Fittingly, Christie's top Basquiat offering is "La Hara"-a 1981 acrylic and oil-stick of an angry-looking New York police officer estimated at \$22-28 million. "Context is the best helper to explain art and I think it's great to have it right now," says Gouzer. Otherwise Christie's top lot is Francis Bacon's "Three Studies of George Dyer" valued at \$50 million, the British artist's first portrait of his long-time muse and lover, a handsome petty thief from London's East End.

The triptych was once owned by author Roald Dahl and has been shown at the Tate Britain and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Christie's is also chasing big bucks for another artist who is even less of a household name but another increasing commercial force: \$35-55 million for Cy Twombly's largely abstract "Leda and the Swan." "Most people even today will say, 'Oh my child can paint this.' Your child cannot paint this," says Christie's specialist Koji Inoue. Sotheby's set the Twombly auction record in 2015 at \$70.5 million. The artist was the subject of a retrospective in Paris last year. "We feel like he's finally getting his due," Inoue said.

Beyond craziness

Highlights of the impressionist and modern sales are a Picasso portrait of his mistress Dora Maar, valued at \$35-55 million at Christie's, and Egon Schiele's "Danae" at Sotheby's for \$30-40 million, painted when he was 19 years old. Much of the art being offered this season is fresh to market-at Christie's more than 80 percent of the works in both categories have never been offered at auction or have been off the market for 20 years or more. Experts say they are focusing on quality rather than quantity, not expecting to reach the giddy heights of 2015, when records tumbled and Picasso's "The Women of Algiers (Version O)" became the most expensive art ever sold at auction for \$179.4 million.

"I think that this market is very smart right now, I don't think it's the same craziness it used to be in 2015," said Billault. He disagrees that interest is cooling in China, where new wealth has driven much of the exponential growth. Neither have political earthquakes-Donald Trump's election in the United States and Brexit in Britain-fanned sluggish sales. "Last November everyone wondered, given our election," says Jessica Fertig, senior Christie's specialist in Impressionist and Modern Art. "We had an incredibly strong sale, so we have no reason to feel that this season is going to be any different," she said. — AFP



A Sotheby's official speaks about an untitled painting by Jean-Michel Basquiat during a media preview at Sotheby's in New York. — AFP photos



A man looks at Jean-Michel Basquiat 'La Hara' during Christie's press preview of the 20th Century Week, in New York. Christie's and Sotheby's are currently holding their Spring Auction previews.



Satya Nadella



Scott Guthrie

MICROSOFT ANNOUNCES NEW TOOLS, SERVICES TO HELP DEVELOPERS MODERNIZE EXISTING APPS AND BUILD MORE INTELLIGENT ONES

KUWAIT: Satya Nadella, Scott Guthrie and Harry Shum welcomed thousands of developers to Seattle for Build 2017 - Microsoft's annual developer conference. During his opening keynote, Nadella announced that Windows had reached 500 million Windows 10 monthly active devices and noted how - together - Windows, Microsoft Office and Microsoft Azure offer developers more than a billion opportunities to connect their innovations with Microsoft customers. Microsoft also announced new Azure data and cloud services to help developers quickly modernize their existing apps, new AI and Azure services that allow any developer to more easily build intelligent apps, with understanding and natural user interaction capabilities, and showcased new data, IoT edge and AI services built for a future with an intelligent cloud and intelligent edge.

"In a world of near infinite compute power and an exponential growth in data, we are focused on empowering every developer to build applications for this new era of intelligent cloud and intelligent edge," said Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft.

More intelligence

Our world is overloaded with information, every minute, and yet it is in this very information - data - that opportunities and insights abound. To help customers realize these opportunities, Microsoft shared an early peek into innovations it is bringing to bear to help every person and organization achieve more. In support of this vision Microsoft announced the following:

A preview of Azure IoT Edge, technology that extends the intelligence - and other benefits - of cloud computing to edge devices.

Extensions to the Microsoft Graph to combine insights from the world of work with device insights and contextual awareness of the physical world.

Technology that will allow you to search the real world in the same way you search the digital world, helping to keep your data safe and secure while making you more productive.

Cloud and tooling

Microsoft showcased how it is meeting developers where they are, and helping them be more successful, with new Microsoft Azure and Visual Studio services and tools to help modernize existing applications and quickly build intelligent apps for all major platforms:

- Introducing Azure Cosmos DB, built from the ground up to power planet-scale cloud services and data-intensive applications - from IoT to AI to mobile - with incredible performance, fault tolerance and support for every type of data, including graph. It is the industry's first globally distributed, multi-model database service to deliver horizontal scale with guaranteed uptime, throughput, consistency and single-digit millisecond latency at the 99th percentile. Developers get incredible flexibility with the only schema-free database service, with support for popular NoSQL APIs, that also offers five well-defined consistency choices while auto-indexing all your data.

- New MySQL- and PostgreSQL-managed services that join Azure SQL Database to give developers expanded choice and flexi-

bility on a service platform that delivers high availability and scalability, with minimal downtime, and data retention and recovery.

- An early preview of Microsoft's new database migration services, which will allow Oracle and SQL Server customers to more easily move their data and quickly modernize their apps.

- Azure SQL Database improvements:

- * A new Managed Instance private preview, which offers customers SQL Server instance-level compatibility and makes it even easier for organizations to migrate existing SQL Server apps to Azure SQL Database.

- * General availability of Threat Detection and preview of Graph support.

- General availability of Visual Studio 2017 for Mac, which enables developers to work seamlessly across Windows and Mac environments with full support for mobile, web and cloud workloads, and previews of Docker tools, Azure Functions and Xamarin IoT support.

- Support for containers of nearly every type, on every platform, with the general availability of Windows Server Containers support in Azure Service Fabric, with Visual Studio tooling, and a preview of the ability to use Docker Compose support for Service Fabric to deploy containerized apps to Service Fabric - enabling developers to deliver mission-critical, scalable apps and services.

- DocuSign supports a rapidly growing customer base of 300,000 companies and more than 200 million users across 188 countries. The company today announced Microsoft Azure is its preferred cloud for global expansion, starting in Canada. DocuSign uses Azure SQL Database to process enormous volumes of digital transactions.

On-ramps

With more than 100 million monthly commercial active users, Office 365 is where the world works. Today Microsoft announced plans [Office Blog] to better connect developers with Office 365 customers around the globe:

- Any developer can now publish for Microsoft Teams, the new chat-based workspace in Office 365. Coming soon, apps in Teams will be more discoverable for end users through a new app experience. Developers can also add new capabilities to Teams apps, including third-party notifications in the activity feed, Compose Extensions and Actionable Messages.

- Microsoft also made new Microsoft Graph APIs available to developers, including APIs from SharePoint and Planner. The Microsoft Graph gives developers access to Office 365 data and intelligence and helps connect the dots between people, conversations, projects, schedules, processes and content. These insights help developers build smarter apps, enabling smarter ways to work.

- Developers and ISVs who host their production SaaS applications on Microsoft Azure and sign up through the Azure website can now have their apps' data and workflow automatically extended to authorized Office 365 customers through standard connectors for PowerApps and Microsoft Flow. To help ISVs expand their

business even further, Microsoft is also providing additional incentives to its sales force when they jointly co-sell eligible SaaS apps and services to enterprise customers.

AI technology

Microsoft also highlighted its vision to amplify human ingenuity with intelligent technology, bringing AI to every developer through the unique combination of the Microsoft cloud and AI. New cognitive services, platform innovations in the Microsoft Bot Framework, advances in deep learning tools, continued infusion of AI into the company's products and services, and intelligent insights offered through the Microsoft Graph unlock this opportunity for developers and new growth scenarios for businesses. New announcements included the following:

- The company added new services to the industry's broadest offering of cognitive services and now 29 services for developers, with unique customization options. That enables developers to infuse off-the-shelf or custom intelligence capabilities such as vision, speech, language, knowledge and search into their app and bot experiences in any scenario. New services include Bing Custom Search, Custom Vision Service, Custom Decision Service and Video Indexer. A new PowerPoint add-in called Presentation Translator, which leverages Microsoft's Translation APIs, was featured, allowing real-time translation to multiple languages during any presentation. The new Cognitive Services Labs were also launched, enabling developers to experiment with new services, such as a Gesture API, still in the early stages of development.

- Using the new adaptive cards supported by the Microsoft Bot Framework, developers can write cards once that look great across multiple apps and platforms. Using the Bot Framework, developers can also now publish to new channels including Bing, Cortana and Skype for Business, and implement Microsoft's payment request API for fast and easy checkout in their bots.

- Azure Batch AI Training is a new Azure offering, available in private preview only, that will allow developers and data scientists to configure an environment with parameters and run their models against multiple CPUs, multiple GPUs and eventually field-programmable gate arrays.

- In addition to Harman Kardon's Invoke intelligent speaker with Cortana, partnerships were also signed with HP on devices and Intel on reference platforms to deliver Cortana-enabled devices.

- The Cortana Skills Kit is now in public preview. Developers can build skills for Cortana by creating a bot and publishing it to the new Cortana channel of the Bot Framework. This is available across Windows 10, Android, iOS and the new Cortana-powered Harman Kardon Invoke speaker. The Cortana Skills kit is currently available in the U.S. only.

- A demonstration was provided on how multiple Microsoft products and services, including Dynamics 365, Office 365, Microsoft Teams, Cortana Skills, Microsoft Graph and Sentiment Analysis, will be integrated into Tact, the sales experience platform that turns any connected device into a AI-powered virtual sales assistant, later this year.

HOW UPSKILLING TO CLOUD SPECIALIST CAN BE A SEA-CHANGE IN YOUR CAREER

By Necip Ozyucel

Cloud and Enterprise Lead, Microsoft Gulf

As a business community, the Gulf region is now some distance into the digital transformation forest. Every day, every week, every month, we see more and more organizations recognize that the cloud and its benefits are not just commercial hype, but real-world, tangible gains that can propel businesses and public sector entities into previously unimaginable efficiencies. But to seize the advantage, technology industry professionals need to update their skillsets to include the cloud.

The UAE government, and many others throughout the region, have initiated medium- and long-term economic visions that place technology - and the need for related skills - at the very forefront of national planning. Government-agency technology platforms have been used to deliver apps and portals that have immeasurably improved information processing and service.

Digital transformation for enterprises is focused on increased customer engagement, empowerment of employees, enhanced operations and transformed products and services. To translate these vital pillars into viable solutions requires the kind of skills that are, to date, lacking in the region. A recent Microsoft survey found that 37 percent of organizations in the Middle East and Africa believe a skills gap is the main barrier to cloud adoption. This must change.

According to Harvard Business Review (HBR) Analytic Service Report, non-digital

firms are twice more likely as digital leaders to cite a lack of digital skills as a barrier over the next three years (49 percent versus 21 percent). There's a huge gap in skills for both user-experience design expertise (68 percent of digital leaders have this skill compared with only 11 percent of non-digitals and 39 percent of hybrids) and specialized data skills



Necip Ozyucel

like data science and data engineering (62 percent versus 20 percent and 46 percent, respectively).

HBR also states that the skills 89 percent of respondents deem most critical for success in 2020 are the ability of all professionals to work with data and analytics and, the ability to collaborate with a variety of people and

organizations. For tech pros, there is a lot of incentive in cloud upskilling. When the Microsoft survey looked at businesses around the world, it found a significant jump in the salaries commanded by cloud professionals, as companies began recruitment drives for their digital transformation projects. Amid the emerging constraints of the petrochemical price dip, public and private sector entities are focused on doing more with less. That is one of cloud computing's specialties and regional companies beginning to realize that. And as a surge in demand for cloud professionals grows, so will their remuneration.

Where cloud skills are concerned, there has never been a better time to get on board the train. In 2015, IDC predicted that more than a third of IT positions worldwide will be cloud related by 2020. Its analysts also warned that the cloud-readiness of IT professionals - or lack thereof - would start to impact operations. They further claimed global IT employment will grow about 4 percent every year to 2020, and that all growth will be concentrated in cloud-related positions.

So, trained cloud professionals are indispensable in the digitally transformed future. The competitive edge of governments and enterprises is at stake, and societies and customers are waiting. Cloud providers enjoy huge economies of scale and can provide security and other services more effectively than their customers can do on their own. More with less. Advanced machine learning, business intelligence and analytics solutions can reinvent operational models. More with

less. Natural-language platforms can enhance customer service through chat-bots. More with less. And at the heart of these more-with-less efficiencies lies the cloud specialist.

A Microsoft-sponsored IDC whitepaper reveals global demand for cloud-ready professionals will continue to surge, to create as many as 7 million cloud-related jobs worldwide. As far back as 2012, some 1.7 million cloud-related positions were available, but the survey showed that recruiters were unable to fill them, due to a lack of certified skills among candidates.

Recruiters and employers alike are forever saying that training is the wisest investment you can make in yourself. Being in a position to save your organization trouble or money is what makes a successful career. To that end, joining the cloud revolution is one of the best moves an IT professional can make.

Microsoft has previously urged IT professionals across the UAE and the wider Middle East to sharpen their cloud skills. We offer outstanding training courses and certifications on our own Azure platform. These run as a mix of scheduled and on-demand online courses, covering a rich range of cloud-focused topics.

Technology professionals come through these programs with broader horizons and useful, applicable skillsets, regardless of their initial knowledge. Microsoft has designed the courses to show how Azure can be applied to any organization, regardless of sector or scale, to ensure that the Gulf, the wider Middle East and the world is able to achieve more.

THE TOUGHEST CHALLENGE FOR SELF-DRIVING CARS? HUMAN DRIVERS

DETROIT: In just a few years, well-mannered self-driving robotaxis will share the roads with reckless, law-breaking human drivers. The prospect is causing migraines for the people developing the robotaxis. A self-driving car would be programmed to drive at the speed limit. Humans routinely exceed it by 10 to 15 mph (16 to 24 kph) - just try entering the New Jersey Turnpike at normal speed. Self-driving cars wouldn't dare cross a double yellow line; humans do it all the time. And then there are those odd local traffic customs to which humans quickly adapt. In Los Angeles and other places, for instance, there's the "California Stop," where drivers roll through stop signs if no traffic is crossing. In Southwestern Pennsylvania, courteous drivers practice the "Pittsburgh Left," where it is customary to let one oncoming car turn left in front of them when a traffic light turns green. The same thing happens in Boston. During rush hours near Ann Arbor, Michigan, drivers regularly cross a double-yellow line to queue up for a left-turn onto a freeway.

"There's an endless list of these cases where we as humans know the context, we know when to bend the rules and when to break the rules," says Raj Rajkumar, a computer engineering professor at Carnegie Mellon University who leads the school's autonomous car research.

Human behavior

Although autonomous cars are likely to carry passengers or cargo in limited areas during the next three to five years, experts say it will take many years before robotaxis can coexist with human-piloted vehicles on most side streets, boulevards and freeways. That's because programmers have to figure out human behavior and local traffic idiosyncrasies. And teaching a car to use that

knowledge will require massive amounts of data and big computing power that is prohibitively expensive at the moment. "Driverless cars are very rule-based, and they don't understand social graces," says Missy Cummings, director of Duke University's Humans and Autonomy Lab.

Driving customs and road conditions are dramatically different across the globe, with narrow, congested lanes in European cities, and anarchy in Beijing's giant traffic jams. In India's capital, New Delhi, luxury cars share poorly marked and congested lanes with bicycles, scooters, trucks, and even an occasional cow or elephant. Then there is the problem of aggressive humans who make dangerous moves such as cutting cars off on freeways or turning left in front of oncoming traffic. In India, for example, even when lanes are marked, drivers swing from lane to lane without hesitation. Already there have been isolated cases of human drivers pulling into the path of cars such as Teslas, knowing they will stop because they're equipped with automatic emergency braking. "It's hard to program in human stupidity or someone who really tries to game the technology," says John Hanson, spokesman for Toyota's autonomous car unit.

Kathy Winter, vice president of automated driving solutions for Intel, is optimistic that the cars will be able to see and think like humans before 2030. Cars with sensors for driver-assist systems already are gathering data about road signs, lane lines and human driver behavior. Winter hopes auto and tech companies developing autonomous systems and cars will contribute this information to a giant database. Artificial intelligence developed by Intel and other companies eventually could access the data and make quick decisions similar to humans, Winter says.



PITTSBURGH: In this Wednesday, Sept 14, 2016, file photo, a self-driving Uber car stops at a red light on Liberty Avenue through the Bloomfield neighborhood of Pittsburgh. —AP

High cost

Programmers are optimistic that someday the cars will be able to handle even Beijing's traffic. But the cost could be high, and it might be a decade or more before Chinese regulators deem self-driving cars reliable enough for widespread public use, says John Zeng of LMC Automotive Consulting.

Intel's Winter expects fully autonomous cars to collect, process and analyze four terabytes of data in 1 1/2 hours of driving, which is the average amount a person spends in a car each day. That's equal to storing over 1.2 million photos or 2,000 hours of movies. Such computing power now costs

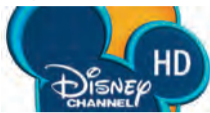
over \$100,000 per vehicle, Zeng says. But that cost could fall as more cars are built. Someday autonomous cars will have common sense programmed in so they will cross a double-yellow line when warranted or to speed up and find a gap to enter a freeway. Carnegie Mellon has taught its cars to handle the "Pittsburgh Left" by waiting a full second or longer for an intersection to clear before proceeding at a green light. Sensors also track crossing traffic and can figure out if a driver is going to stop for a sign or red light. Eventually there will be vehicle-to-vehicle communication to avoid crashes. —AP

OSN MOVIES HD
ACTION

- 01:15 REC 2
- 02:45 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 04:30 Echo Effect
- 06:00 Mad Max: Fury Road
- 08:15 San Andreas
- 10:15 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 12:00 King Arthur
- 14:15 Ladder 49
- 16:15 San Andreas
- 18:15 Harlock: Space Pirate
- 20:15 Pompeii
- 22:00 Survivor
- 23:45 Hitman: Agent 47

- 04:00 Deadly Wives
- 05:00 Monster In My Family
- 06:00 My Haunted House
- 07:00 My Crazy Ex
- 08:00 The First 48
- 09:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 10:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 11:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 12:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 13:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 14:00 The First 48
- 15:00 The First 48
- 16:00 Monster In My Family
- 17:00 Monster In My Family
- 18:00 Evil Up Close
- 19:00 Evil Up Close
- 20:00 Evil Up Close
- 21:00 The First 48
- 22:00 Homicide Hunter
- 23:00 Babies Behind Bars

- 19:40 Battle Bots
- 20:30 React To That
- 20:55 React To That
- 21:20 Now That's Funny
- 22:10 The Carbonaro Effect
- 22:35 The Carbonaro Effect
- 23:00 World's Funniest Fails
- 23:50 Destroyed In Seconds



- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:25 Hank Zipzer
- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:55 Hank Zipzer
- 04:15 The Hive
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- 04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:25 Hank Zipzer
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 The 7D
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:25 Jessie
- 07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 07:55 Austin & Ally
- 08:20 Rolling With The Ronks
- 08:45 The Zhuzhus
- 09:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 09:35 Elena Of Avalor
- 10:00 Stuck In The Middle
- 10:25 Disney The Lodge
- 10:50 Bunk'd
- 11:15 Bizaardvark
- 11:40 The Emperor's New Groove
- 13:05 Welcome To The Ronks
- 13:20 Bizaardvark
- 13:45 Bizaardvark
- 14:10 Bizaardvark
- 14:35 Bizaardvark
- 15:00 Bizaardvark

- 15:25 Jessie
- 15:50 Jessie
- 16:15 Austin & Ally
- 16:40 Austin & Ally
- 17:05 Descendants Wicked World
- 17:10 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:35 Liv And Maddie
- 18:00 Girl Meets World
- 18:25 The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning
- 19:45 Welcome To The Ronks
- 20:00 Star Darlings
- 20:05 Stuck In The Middle
- 20:30 Bizaardvark
- 20:55 Bunk'd
- 21:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 21:45 Disney The Lodge
- 22:10 Girl Meets World
- 22:35 That's So Raven
- 23:00 Shake It Up
- 23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:35 The Hive
- 00:45 Loopdidoo
- 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:15 Calimero
- 01:30 Art Attack
- 01:55 Zou
- 02:05 Loopdidoo
- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:35 Calimero
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 The Hive
- 03:40 Loopdidoo
- 03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:10 Art Attack
- 04:35 Loopdidoo
- 04:50 Calimero
- 05:05 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou
- 06:00 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Loopdidoo
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:15 Calimero
- 07:30 Loopdidoo
- 07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 08:30 Goldie & Bear
- 09:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 09:30 Doc McStuffins
- 10:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 10:30 Sofia The First
- 11:00 The Lion Guard
- 11:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 12:00 PJ Masks
- 12:25 Goldie & Bear
- 12:55 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 13:20 The Lion Guard
- 13:50 Sofia The First
- 14:20 Sofia The First
- 14:45 Sofia The First
- 15:10 Sofia The First
- 15:40 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 16:05 PJ Masks
- 16:35 The Lion Guard
- 17:05 Miles From Tomorrow
- 17:35 Sofia The First
- 18:05 Sofia The First
- 18:35 Doc McStuffins
- 19:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:35 Sofia The First
- 20:05 Goldie & Bear
- 20:35 Goldie & Bear
- 21:05 Sofia The First
- 21:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
- 22:00 Goldie & Bear
- 22:25 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 22:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 23:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 23:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 23:55 PJ Masks



- 00:30 Supertruckers
- 01:20 JFK: The Lost Tapes
- 02:10 Fast N' Loud
- 03:00 Diesel Brothers
- 03:50 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
- 04:40 How Do They Do It?
- 05:05 How Do They Do It?
- 05:30 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 How Do They Do It?
- 06:30 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Storage Hunters UK

- 07:25 Storage Hunters UK
- 07:50 Storage Hunters UK
- 08:15 Storage Hunters UK
- 08:40 Storage Hunters UK
- 09:05 How Do They Do It?
- 09:30 How Do They Do It?
- 09:55 How Do They Do It?
- 10:20 How Do They Do It?
- 10:45 How Do They Do It?
- 11:10 Gold Rush: Parker's Trail
- 12:00 Rebel Gold
- 12:50 Abandoned Engineering
- 13:40 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 14:30 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 15:20 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 16:10 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 17:00 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 17:50 Todd Sampson's Body Hack
- 18:40 Marooned With Ed Stafford
- 19:30 Deadliest Job Interview
- 20:20 What On Earth?
- 21:10 Supertruckers
- 22:00 JFK: The Lost Tapes
- 22:50 Yukon Men
- 23:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier



- 00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
- 07:00 Supa Strikas
- 07:25 Supa Strikas
- 07:50 Marvel's Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 08:15 Gravity Falls
- 08:40 Walk The Prank
- 09:05 Two More Eggs
- 09:10 K.C. Undercover
- 09:35 Milo Murphy's Law
- 10:00 Supa Strikas
- 10:25 Supa Strikas
- 10:50 Supa Strikas
- 11:20 Supa Strikas
- 11:45 Supa Strikas
- 12:10 Supa Strikas
- 12:35 Supa Strikas
- 13:00 Robin Hood
- 14:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 14:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Milo Murphy's Law
- 15:40 K.C. Undercover
- 16:05 Walk The Prank
- 16:30 Atomic Puppet
- 16:55 Lab Rats
- 17:25 Mech-X4
- 17:50 K.C. Undercover
- 18:15 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 18:40 Mightas Med
- 19:10 Star Wars Rebels
- 19:35 Meet The Robinsons
- 21:05 Danger Mouse
- 21:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 21:45 Mighty Med
- 22:10 Star Wars Rebels
- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Marvel's Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 23:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 23:35 Boyster



- 00:00 E! News
- 00:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 01:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 01:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 02:50 E! News
- 03:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 04:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 04:50 Botched By Nature
- 05:40 Botched By Nature
- 06:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 07:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 09:10 E! News: Daily Pop
- 10:05 Botched
- 10:55 Botched
- 11:45 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 12:35 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 13:25 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 14:15 E! News
- 14:45 Celebrity Style Story
- 15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
- 16:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 18:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 19:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 20:00 E! News
- 21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 23:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Wildest Africa
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Mutant Planet
- 05:15 Cats 101
- 06:02 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 06:49 Wildest Africa
- 07:36 Swamp Brothers
- 08:00 Going Ape
- 08:25 Animal Cops Houston
- 09:15 Meet The Penguins
- 09:40 Meet The Penguins
- 10:10 From WAGs To Riches
- 11:05 Speed Of Life
- 12:00 Wild Ones
- 12:25 Wild Ones
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 14:45 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 15:40 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 16:35 Cats 101
- 17:30 Cats 101
- 18:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 19:20 Rugged Justice
- 20:15 Wildest Africa
- 21:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 22:05 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 23:00 Rugged Justice
- 23:55 Tanked

Discovery Family

- 00:40 Ultimate Survival
- 01:30 Science Of The Movies
- 02:20 Battle Bots
- 03:10 Don't Blink
- 03:35 Don't Blink
- 04:00 Now That's Funny
- 04:50 Ultimate Survival
- 05:40 How It's Made
- 06:05 How It's Made
- 06:30 Storm Chasers
- 07:20 Mythbusters
- 08:00 Doki
- 08:25 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
- 08:50 Kids vs Film
- 09:15 Kids vs Film
- 09:40 Bad Dog
- 10:30 Bad Dog
- 11:20 Bad Dog
- 12:10 Bad Dog
- 13:00 Bad Dog
- 13:50 Mythbusters
- 14:40 Mythbusters
- 15:30 Mythbusters
- 16:20 Mythbusters
- 17:10 Mythbusters
- 18:00 Science Of The Movies
- 18:50 Dogs: The Untold Story

BBC FIRST

- 00:40 Doctors
- 01:15 Doctors
- 01:45 SS-GB
- 02:45 SS-GB
- 03:40 Benidorm
- 04:35 Doctors
- 05:05 Doctors
- 05:35 Doctors
- 06:10 Father Brown
- 07:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Doctors
- 08:00 Doctors
- 08:30 Doctors
- 09:00 Doctors
- 09:30 Doctors
- 10:00 Doctors
- 10:30 Eastenders
- 11:00 Eastenders
- 11:30 Eastenders
- 12:00 Eastenders
- 12:30 Holby City
- 13:20 Casualty
- 14:15 Doctors
- 14:45 Doctors
- 15:15 Father Brown
- 16:05 The Musketeers
- 17:00 Call The Midwife
- 18:00 Call The Midwife
- 19:00 Doctors
- 19:30 Eastenders
- 20:00 Father Brown
- 20:45 Rev.
- 21:15 Death In Paradise
- 22:20 Doctor Who
- 23:15 Thirteen

ci crime & investigation network

- 00:00 Deadly Wives
- 01:00 Monster In My Family
- 02:00 My Haunted House
- 03:00 Killer Kids



SURVIVOR ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2017



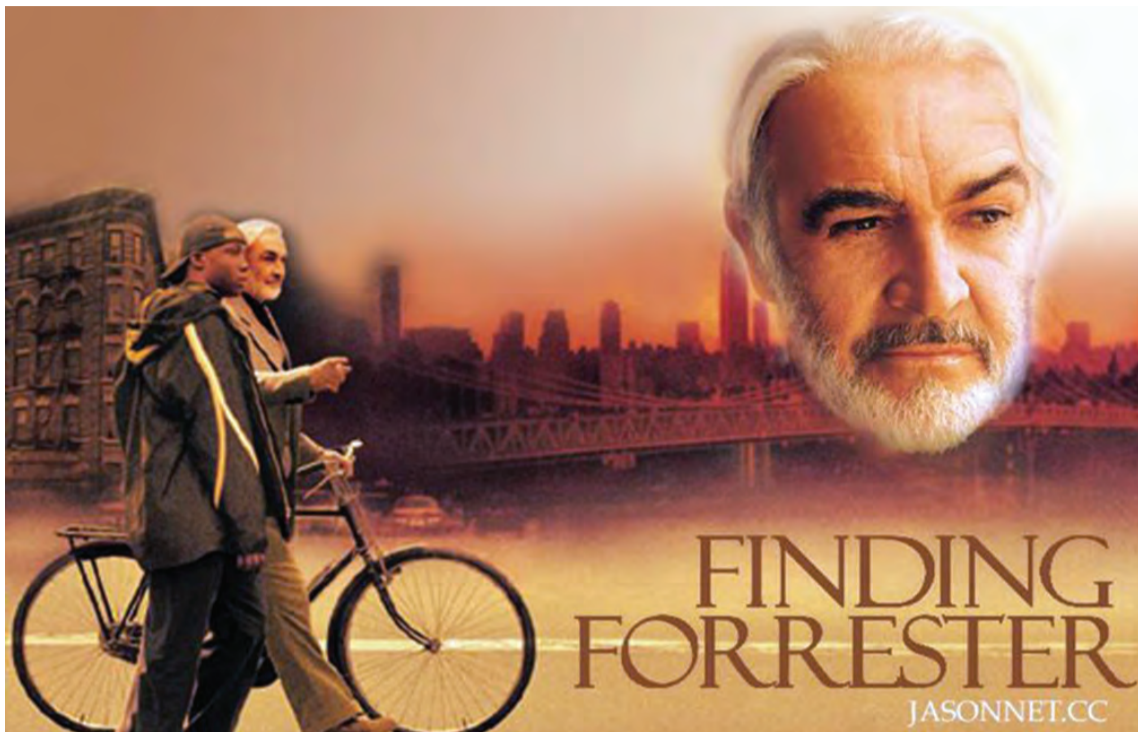
- 00:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 01:00 Jenny Morris Cooks Morocco
- 01:30 Jenny Morris Cooks Morocco
- 02:00 Reza Spice Prince Of Vietnam
- 02:30 Reza Spice Prince Of Vietnam
- 03:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 04:00 Man Fire Food
- 04:30 Man Fire Food
- 05:00 Chopped
- 06:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 07:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 08:00 Chopped
- 09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 09:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 10:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 10:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 11:00 Siba's Table
- 11:30 Siba's Table
- 12:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 12:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 13:00 Man Fire Food
- 13:30 Man Fire Food
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 16:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 17:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 17:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 18:00 Siba's Table
- 18:30 Siba's Table
- 19:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 19:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 20:00 Man Fire Food
- 20:30 Man Fire Food
- 21:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 21:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 22:00 Restaurant: Impossible
- 23:00 Mystery Diners
- 23:30 Mystery Diners



- 00:15 Emmerdale
- 00:40 Coronation Street
- 01:10 The Chase
- 02:00 Emmerdale
- 02:25 Emmerdale
- 02:50 Emmerdale
- 03:15 Emmerdale
- 03:40 Emmerdale
- 04:05 Emmerdale
- 04:25 Coronation Street
- 04:50 Coronation Street
- 05:15 Coronation Street
- 05:40 Coronation Street
- 06:05 Coronation Street
- 06:30 Jekyll And Hyde
- 07:25 Shoot The Messenger
- 08:20 It's Not Rocket Science
- 09:15 Guess This House
- 10:10 Broadchurch
- 11:05 Broadchurch
- 11:55 Tutankhamun
- 12:50 The Chase
- 13:45 Coach Trip
- 14:10 Coach Trip
- 14:35 Coach Trip
- 15:00 Coach Trip
- 15:25 Coach Trip
- 15:50 Coach Trip
- 16:10 Surprise Surprise Christmas Special
- 17:05 Jekyll And Hyde
- 18:00 Shoot The Messenger
- 18:55 Tutankhamun
- 19:45 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 20:25 Broadchurch
- 21:10 Broadchurch
- 22:00 Surprise Surprise Christmas Special
- 22:55 5 Star Family Reunion
- 23:50 Coronation Street



- 00:00 The Universe
- 01:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
- 02:00 Mud Men
- 03:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 03:50 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 04:40 Smartest Guy In The Room
- 05:05 Smartest Guy In The Room
- 05:30 The Universe
- 06:20 America: The Story Of The U.S.
- 07:10 The Universe



FINDING FORRESTER ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 08:00 Mud Men
- 09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 10:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 11:00 Smartest Guy In The Room
- 11:30 Smartest Guy In The Room
- 12:00 The Universe
- 13:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
- 14:00 Mud Men
- 15:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 16:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 17:00 Smartest Guy In The Room
- 17:30 Smartest Guy In The Room
- 18:00 The Universe
- 19:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 20:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 21:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 22:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 23:00 Million Dollar Genius



- 00:30 101 People That Made The 20th Century
- 01:20 Search For The Lost Giants
- 02:10 Lost In Transmission
- 03:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 03:50 Storage Wars
- 04:15 Pawn Stars UK
- 04:40 Pawn Stars UK
- 05:05 Pawn Stars UK
- 05:30 Pawn Stars UK
- 06:00 Lost In Transmission
- 07:00 Storage Wars
- 07:25 Storage Wars
- 07:50 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 08:15 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 08:40 American Pickers
- 09:30 American Pickers
- 10:20 Lost In Transmission
- 11:10 Leepu And Pitbull
- 12:00 Shipping Wars
- 12:25 Shipping Wars
- 12:50 Ice Road Truckers
- 13:40 Ax Men
- 14:30 Lost Worlds
- 15:20 101 People That Made The 20th Century
- 16:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 17:00 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 17:50 Big Easy Motors
- 18:15 Big Easy Motors
- 18:40 American Restoration
- 19:30 American Pickers
- 20:20 American Pickers
- 21:10 Alone
- 22:00 Alone
- 22:50 Mummies Alive
- 23:40 Search For The Lost Giants



- 00:20 What's For Sale?
- 00:50 What's For Sale?
- 01:15 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 02:10 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 02:40 Andy And Ben Eat Australia

- 03:05 Carnival Eats
- 03:35 My Restaurant In India
- 04:00 Chasing The Sun
- 04:25 Chasing The Sun
- 04:55 Glamour Puds
- 05:25 Croatia's Finest
- 05:50 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 06:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 07:15 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 08:10 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 08:35 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 09:05 Restoration Man
- 10:00 Living Free With Kimi Werner
- 10:55 Chasing The Sun
- 11:20 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 11:50 Fish Of The Day
- 12:15 Fish Of The Day
- 12:45 What's For Sale?
- 13:10 What's For Sale?
- 13:40 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 14:05 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
- 14:35 Carnival Eats
- 15:00 My Restaurant In India
- 15:30 Chasing The Sun
- 15:55 Chasing The Sun
- 16:25 Glamour Puds
- 16:50 Croatia's Finest
- 17:20 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 18:15 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 18:40 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 19:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 19:35 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 20:05 Chasing The Sun
- 20:30 Glamour Puds
- 21:00 Croatia's Finest
- 21:30 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 22:00 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 23:00 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 23:25 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 23:55 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet



- 00:20 Helicopter Wars
- 01:10 Locked Up Abroad
- 02:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware
- 03:00 Beast Hunter
- 04:00 Inside
- 05:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 06:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 07:00 Alaska Fish Wars
- 08:00 Wicked Tuna
- 09:00 Dog Whisperer
- 10:00 Dog Whisperer
- 11:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 11:30 Danger Decoded
- 12:00 Genius
- 13:00 Inside Singapore Airlines
- 14:00 Fusion Forager
- 15:00 Route Awakening
- 15:30 Route Awakening
- 16:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 17:00 Mega Factories
- 18:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind
- 19:00 Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey
- 20:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 21:00 Mega Factories

- 21:50 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind
- 22:40 Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey
- 23:30 Air Crash Investigation



- 00:30 Life On The Barrier Reef
- 01:20 Top Cats
- 02:10 Animals Gone Wild Compilations
- 03:00 Operation Sumatran Rhino
- 03:50 Predator Patrol
- 04:45 Animal Superpowers
- 05:40 Born Wild
- 06:35 Incredible Fangs
- 07:30 Monster Fish
- 08:25 Monster Fish
- 09:20 Extreme Animal Babies
- 10:15 Safari Brothers
- 11:10 Secret Life Of Predators
- 12:05 Maneater Manhunt
- 13:00 Shark Alley
- 13:55 Last Of The Longnecks
- 14:50 Predator Patrol
- 15:45 Animal Superpowers
- 16:40 Murder, Mayhem & Meerkats
- 17:35 Animal Fight Club 4.5
- 18:30 Hunter Hunted
- 19:25 Wild Botswana: Lion Brotherhood
- 20:20 Animal Superpowers
- 21:10 Murder, Mayhem & Meerkats
- 22:00 Animal Fight Club 4.5
- 22:50 Hunter Hunted
- 23:40 Wild Botswana: Lion Brotherhood



- 01:30 Race To Witch Mountain
- 03:15 Tuck Everlasting
- 04:45 Pirates Of The Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest
- 07:30 Ratatouille
- 09:30 The Boxrolls
- 11:15 Pirates Of The Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest
- 13:45 Gnomeo & Juliet
- 15:15 Brave
- 17:00 Toy Story
- 18:30 High School Musical 3: Senior Year
- 20:30 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
- 22:15 Brave



- 00:30 Vacation
- 02:15 No Stranger Than Love
- 03:45 Someone Marry Barry
- 05:15 Perfect Match
- 06:45 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 08:45 The Rewrite
- 10:30 Perfect Match
- 12:00 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 14:00 The Rewrite
- 16:00 The Grand Seduction

- 18:00 Trust Me
- 19:30 You Again
- 21:30 Growing Up And Other Lies
- 23:00 The Ladies Man



- 01:15 The Royal Tenenbaums
- 03:15 Infinitely Polar Bear
- 05:00 The Last 5 Years
- 07:00 I Am Bolt
- 09:00 The Yellow Handkerchief
- 11:00 Words And Pictures
- 13:00 Infinitely Polar Bear
- 15:00 Seabiscuit
- 17:30 La Bamba
- 19:30 The Help
- 22:00 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon



- 00:30 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 02:15 The Swan Princess: Pirate Today, Princess Tomorrow
- 03:45 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 05:15 Capture The Flag
- 07:00 Outback
- 08:45 Pooh's Heffalump Movie
- 10:00 Paws
- 11:30 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 13:00 The Swan Princess: Pirate Today, Princess Tomorrow
- 14:30 Ratchet And Clank
- 16:15 Paws
- 17:45 Ghosthunters On Icy Trails
- 19:30 Get Squirrely
- 21:15 Ratchet And Clank
- 23:00 Pooh's Heffalump Movie



- 02:15 Ouija
- 04:00 D-Tox
- 05:40 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes
- 07:30 Hotel Transylvania 2
- 09:00 Twister
- 11:00 Finding Forrester
- 13:30 Just Married
- 15:15 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes
- 17:15 Pitch Perfect 2
- 19:15 X-Men: The Last Stand
- 21:00 Enemy Of The State
- 23:15 There's Something About Mary



- 00:40 Mythbusters
- 01:30 How Do They Do It?
- 01:55 Food Factory
- 02:20 You Have Been Warned
- 03:10 Race To Escape
- 04:00 Nextworld
- 04:48 Mythbusters
- 05:36 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Food Factory
- 06:24 You Have Been Warned
- 07:12 Race To Escape
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 Food Factory
- 08:50 Food Factory
- 09:14 Food Factory
- 09:38 Food Factory
- 10:02 Food Factory
- 10:26 How Do They Do It?
- 10:50 How Do They Do It?
- 11:14 How Do They Do It?
- 11:38 How Do They Do It?
- 12:02 How Do They Do It?
- 12:26 Redesign My Brain
- 13:14 Redesign My Brain
- 14:02 Redesign My Brain
- 14:50 Race To Escape
- 15:38 Race To Escape
- 16:26 Mythbusters
- 17:14 Mythbusters
- 18:02 Mythbusters
- 18:50 Mythbusters
- 19:40 Mythbusters
- 20:30 How The Universe Works
- 21:20 Sport Science
- 22:10 How Things Work
- 23:00 Home Factory
- 23:25 Home Factory
- 23:50 Mythbusters



KNES EARLY YEARS TRIP TO AQUARIUM

The Early Years children of Kuwait National English School recently visited the Kuwait Aquarium. This is always a pleasant trip for the children to discover real life water

animals and sparks many exciting and imaginative conversations. The children really enjoyed the trip this year and have many questions and some interesting answers to sea life and

its unique qualities. Kuwait National English School would like to thank all those who work with the Kuwait Aquarium for providing and safeguarding such a treasure.

R RAMESH MEMORIAL DIASPORA AWARD FOR E M KABEER

E M Kabeer, noted social worker based in Saudi Arabia has been chosen for R Ramesh Memorial Diaspora Award for the year 2017. KALA-Kuwait constituted this yearly award since 2014 in the name of Late R Ramesh, one of the mentors of KALA-Kuwait who passed away in 2012. The award consist of Rs 25,000 and a citation.



The awardee is chosen considering his humanitarian efforts in the area of charity and social work. E M Kabeer has been in the forefront for charity and social activities among the expatriate community for the past 30 years in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. He led many campaigns in Dammam among Indian community including cancer patients and other people suffering from other ailments offering them support in all levels.

Hailing from Poonthura, Thiruvananthapuram, Kabeer has worked in various capacities as president, Charity Wing Secretary etc of Progressive Unity of Dammam, Navodaya. Currently he is one of its patrons. The award will be conferred to Kabeer by the Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly Sreeramakrishnan during a program titled 'Mayookham' to be organized by KALA-Kuwait on 19 May, 2017 at Qadsiya Sporting Club.



KPAC LALITHA ATTENDS CHANGANACHERY ASSN EVENT

Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi (KSNA) Chairperson and well-known south Indian actress addresses a meet the press event on Thursday. She arrived in Kuwait on a two-day visit to inaugurate the Changanachery Association of Kuwait's annual event and its charity project

at a program in Abbasiya. The others who attended the meet included Changanachery municipal chairman Sebastian Mathew Manamel, Changanachery Association President Sunil P Antony, General Secretary Ranjith Poovely, Vinod Panicker and Manju Nedikalaparambil.



LULU HYPERMARKET LAUNCHES MANGO PASSION FEST 2017

LuLu Hypermarket, the largest hypermarket in the region, launched their much-anticipated Mango Passion 2017 festival at its Qurain outlet on 10 May.

The 11-day festival was inaugurated by Talal Al-Qurifh & Fahad H Al-Qurifh during a ceremony in the presence of LuLu top management, shoppers and well-wishers.

The promotion, which is common for all LuLu outlets, offers 50 varieties of delectable mangoes with origins from eight countries - India, Malaysia, Kenya, Thailand, Uganda, Sri Lanka, Brazil and USA. Shoppers should not miss the opportunity to try popular and exotic types of mangoes such as Alphonso, Kesar, Daseri, Rajapuri, Mango Round, Green Sweet Mango, Tommy Atkins and Waterlilly that are now exclusively available at LuLu outlets. It is a pure pleasure to savor the sweet-

ness of mangoes, and with different types of mangoes having their own unique flavor and texture, shoppers are spoiled for choice during the promotion. Large cutout displays of mangoes reflecting the theme of the promotion adds charm to the shopping experience.

The Mango Passion fest 2017 is an incredible venture by LuLu Hypermarket to satisfy cravings for delicious and exotic fruits at reasonable prices.

LuLu Hypermarket has consistently branded itself as the company that meets customers' expectations for quality products at competitive prices. The hypermarket presents a unique shopping experience through attractive customer oriented campaigns that help garner shoppers' interest and increase support for the brand.



US TO ARCTIC: TRUMP WILL PUT AMERICA FIRST ON CLIMATE

FAIRBANKS: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned the governments and peoples of the Arctic on Thursday that President Donald Trump will put America first when it comes to climate change. Representatives from the eight nations with territory in the great white north and the indigenous peoples who make their homes there had come to Alaska looking for reassurance.

Trump campaigned for office warning that he may pull the United States out of the 2015 Paris accord and he has already launched a review of Washington's policy towards climate change. The Arctic countries have borne the brunt of global warming so far, with glaciers and sea ice in retreat and threats to both the wildlife and the native people's way of life.

Tillerson told the meeting of the Arctic Council in Fairbanks, Alaska that the region's views would be taken into account, but that Washington's policy will be based on US interests. "In the United States, we are currently reviewing several important policies, including how the Trump administration will approach the issue of climate change," Tillerson said.

"We are appreciative that each of you has an important point of view, and you should know that we are taking the time

to understand your concerns," he promised. "We're not going to rush to make a decision. We're going to work to make the right decision for the United States."

The Fairbanks meeting of the Council came after the White House said this week that Trump will not decide on climate change policy until after a trip to Europe later this month.

Hanging in the balance is the future of the Paris accord, which campaigners, experts and most governments see as the last best hope of slowing global warming. But many of Trump's advisers—along with energy industry lobbyists—argue the accord puts the brakes on oil and coal-driven industries and hurts jobs growth. Under the deal, signed by Washington under former president Barack Obama, more than 190 countries set themselves goals to minimize carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. If the United States, by most measures the world's second-biggest polluter, were to pull out or reduce its goals, efforts to reduce the global temperature increase might fail.

'Paris is the cornerstone'

The joint declaration adopted by the eight-nation Arctic Council simply noted

"the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on climate change and its implementation." But it did not recommit council members, including the United States, to meeting the accord's emissions reduction pledges.

At Thursday's meeting, Tillerson passed the gavel and the two-year rotating leadership of the council switched from the United States to Finland. And the incoming chair, Finland's Foreign Minister Timo Soini, said the Paris accord and the United Nations 2030 goals for sustainable development would guide the council's work. "The Paris climate agreement is the cornerstone for mitigating climate change," Soini said.

His remarks were applauded by delegates and welcomed by leaders from several Arctic indigenous nations, which are represented on the 20-year-old council alongside the eight governments. Local Alaskans who spoke to AFP before the council meeting in the former gold prospecting town of Fairbanks were unanimous that temperatures are rising.

'We carry on'

Ticks and pests that once could not survive in these latitudes have multiplied, they say, and even relatively young adults recall much longer and deeper winter freezes in the past.

Trimble Gilbert, a representative of the roughly 9,000-strong Gwich'in Athabaskan people of central Alaska and northwest Canada, reminded the council what is at stake. "We've been here thousands of years, we've survived during the cold, cold weather," he said.

"When I grew up the weather was really different from today, about 70 below, but people survived. We are the indigenous people, and we still carry on, with our culture. We've been fishing thousands of years and we've been hunting for thousands of years in Alaska," he said, expressing concern that future generations will not be able to feed themselves.

The Arctic Council is a forum allowing officials from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States to coordinate policy. At Thursday's meeting in Fairbanks, members signed a binding accord to better allow scientific researchers access to each others' Arctic waters. — AFP



FAIRBANKS: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson holds the Arctic Council chair's gavel before handing it to Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini (right) as Finland becomes the chair during the plenary session of the Arctic Council meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, on May 11, 2017. — AFP



OROVILLE: In this Feb 15, 2017, file photo, people watch the gushing waters of the Feather River from the town's fish hatchery a day after an evacuation was lifted in Oroville, California. — AP

STAR-CROSSED SALMON SURVIVE SPILLWAY'S EROSION BUT SUFFOCATE

SACRAMENTO: A quarter-million hatchery salmon survived the near-collapse of a California dam's spillway this winter, only to suffocate after a pump failed this week, officials said Thursday. They were among about 5 million baby fall-run Chinook salmon that were rescued in February after tons of mud washed down the Feather River, said California Department of Fish and Wildlife spokesman Andrew Hughsan. The erosion came from the failing emergency spillway near the Oroville dam that caused the precautionary evacuation of nearly 200,000 residents.

The salmon were trucked from the Oroville hatchery to a nearby annex fed by well water. An estimated 200,000 to 300,000 of the fish died Wednesday when a faulty wire caused a well pump to fail overnight, leaving the fish without enough fresh water and oxygen.

The fall-run salmon are not considered an endangered species and the deaths are not expected to significantly affect the state's salmon fishery. "It's just been a really rough year for that hatchery in particular. These fish have gone through a lot," said Amanda Cranford, a natural resources specialist with the National Marine Fisheries Service. They are among about 30 million fall-run salmon reared in Northern California each year in state and federal hatcheries.

John McManus, executive director of the Golden Gate Salmon Association, lauded the department for rescuing the salmon in February and setting up what he called "an ingenious water filtration system" to save another 2 million fish left behind in the Oroville hatchery.

"We feel bad, partly because we've lost some fish, but also because the California Department of Fish and Wildlife just can't catch a break this year," said McManus, whose organization represents the sport fishing and commercial salmon industry. The hatchery annex was never designed to hold so many fish long-term, and there were no auxiliary pumps or pump failure alarms, Hughsan said. Nor were employees there overnight, unlike at the main hatchery, he said.

The annex had older wiring and equipment that had been operating continuously since the fish were transferred there three months ago, Hughsan said. "It was never designed to take on this kind of load, so it did an amazing job," he said. "It saved the 5 million fish that never would have been able to survive if we hadn't moved them over there."

The department is now considering adding alarms and backup pumps and stationing employees at the annex around the clock. The hatchery already released about 3 million salmon this spring. The surviving roughly 2 million fingerlings will be released into the Feather River over the next month when they reach about eight inches long. — AP

SMOKE ALARM: INDONESIANS TAKE TINY STEPS AGAINST BIG TOBACCO

JAKARTA: Indonesian capital has informally declared itself a smoke-free zone as students plan further protests against what they see as an increased effort by cigarette companies to target the young. Indonesia has one of the highest rates of smoking and is the world's fourth-biggest cigarette producer, mostly of the pungent "kretek" clove and tobacco variety, but parliament has proposed a law to boost tobacco output further.

A few groups are now pushing back against Big Tobacco in the country of 250 million people where nearly two-thirds of men smoke and a cigarette pack can cost less than \$2. In eastern Jakarta, a row of at least a dozen houses at the Penas Tanggul neighborhood were painted with bright colors in March, with a blue banner hung

near the entrance declaring it a smoke-free zone. Residents there have been encouraged to stop or to avoid smoking "so this neighborhood will not just be beautiful, but also healthy", said Nobby Sail Andi Supu, a 22-year-old student who coordinated the programme with a civic group. More than 200 people, mostly students, held a protest last month to oppose an upcoming industry exhibition of cigarette-making machines in Jakarta and is planning another rally next week, said Manik Marganamahendra, one of the protest organizers.

Cigarette companies are targeting young Indonesians with new products such as fruit-flavoured cigarettes, as well as attractive packaging and advertisements, the 20-year-old Marganamahendra said. "We actually want the cigarette

industry to totally disappear, but it can't happen overnight," he told Reuters. "We would like to remove the dependence of the Indonesian people on cigarettes."

Despite health concerns, the tobacco industry is often defended in Indonesia by politicians and others as an important source of income for farmers and revenue for the government. Indonesia produced 269.2 billion cigarettes in 2015, according to research firm Euromonitor International. The market was valued at 231.3 trillion rupiah (\$17.3 billion) and growing fast. Major cigarette companies operating in the country include PT Hanjaya Mandala Sampoerna Tbk, which is controlled by U.S. giant Philip Morris International Inc, Djarum Group and PT Gudang Garam Tbk. — Reuters

HEPATITIS C NEARLY TRIPLES IN US IN 5 YEARS

MIAMI: The number of hepatitis C infections have nearly tripled in the United States in the last five years, particularly among people in their 20s, researchers said Thursday. The bloodborne virus is transmitted by injection drug use, dirty needles, blood transfusions and sex. Chronic infection can lead to cirrhosis or cancer of the liver.

Hepatitis C is the top infectious disease killer in the nation, taking nearly 20,000 lives in 2015, said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Experts say the rise of the opioid epidemic, with increasing numbers of

people sharing needles to inject heroin and prescription painkillers, is driving the increase in cases. "New hepatitis C virus infections are increasing most rapidly among young people, with the highest overall number of new infections among 20- to 29-year-olds," said a statement from the CDC. "This is primarily a result of increasing injection drug use associated with America's growing opioid epidemic."

People with hepatitis C often have no symptoms, so they are unaware of their infection. The CDC said the number of new

cases reported to the federal agency was 850 in 2010, and rose to 2,436 cases in 2015.

However, this "does not reflect the true scale of the epidemic. CDC estimates about 34,000 new hepatitis C infections actually occurred in the US in 2015," said the statement. Three-quarters of the 3.5 million Americans living with hepatitis C were born from 1945 to 1965. "Baby boomers are six times more likely to be infected with hepatitis C than those in other age groups and are at much greater risk of death from the virus," said the CDC. New drugs are available that

can cure the infection, but their sky-high price tag makes them out of reach for many people. "We must reach the hardest-hit communities with a range of prevention and treatment services that can diagnose people with hepatitis C and link them to treatment," said Jonathan Mermin, director of CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. "This wide range of services can also prevent the misuse of prescription drugs and ultimately stop drug use-which can also prevent others from getting hepatitis C in the first place." — AFP

HISTORIC 200TH SPACEWALK STARTS LATE, AFTER WATER LEAK

MIAMI: Two US astronauts began the 200th spacewalk at the International Space Station yesterday, following a brief delay after NASA discovered a water leak in equipment that helps power their spacesuits.

The official start time, 9:08 am (1308 GMT), was about two hours after it was supposed to begin, according to NASA. The glitch affected equipment known as the servicing and cooling umbilical (SCU), which supplies power and oxygen to the spacesuits worn by veteran US astronaut Peggy Whitson, 57, and her rookie counterpart, Jack Fischer, 43. The problem involved "a small leak of water at the connection point of the service and cooling umbilical (SCU) as it was hooked up to Jack Fischer's spacesuit in the equipment lock section of the Quest airlock," said NASA commentator Rob Navias.

It was discovered as the astronauts were seated in the airlock inside the space station, before they ventured into the vacuum of space. "This is not the suit itself. Fischer's suit itself is perfectly fine. The crew is perfectly fine," said Navias. "This is the connection point of the component in the airlock itself that provides power,

oxygen, cooling water and communications lines to the two crew members while they are in the process of biding their time, pre-breathing pure oxygen, in the airlock itself." According to

NASA procedures, the spacewalk can go ahead with just one functioning SCU. The plan is for the astronauts to take turns using the SCU, and alternate using battery power in their suits.



This NASA TV handout video grab shows US astronaut Peggy Whitson (lower right) repairing a leak on the International Space Station yesterday. — AFP

'Abbreviated' spacewalk

Spacewalks usually last about six and a half hours, but Friday's would be "abbreviated" due to the late start and would last about four hours, Navias said. The astronauts will focus on one key task, to replace what is known as the EXPRESS Carrier Avionics, or ExPCA, box.

The box weighs 200 pounds (91 kilograms) on Earth, and routes data and commands to experiments inside the space station, Navias said. "It has been exhibiting some thermal issues of late, so it is being replaced," explained Navias. The spacewalk is the ninth of Whitson's career. She holds the record for most spacewalks by a woman. The outing is the first for Fischer, who goes by the nickname "2Fish."

NASA has experienced a series of problems with water leaking inside the astronauts' helmets, most notably in 2013 when water began filling Italian Luca Parmitano's headpiece, forcing him to cut short his spacewalk and make an emergency re-entry into the space lab. NASA's bulky white spacesuits are aging, and the same models have been in use for four decades. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE







Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM





KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (11/05/2017 TO 17/05/2017)

SHARQIA-1
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:30 AM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 2:15 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 4:45 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 7:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 9:15 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:45 PM

SHARQIA-2
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:15 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 2:45 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 5:15 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 7:45 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 10:15 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:45 AM

SHARQIA-3
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 12:45 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 2:45 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 4:30 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 6:15 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 8:00 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 10:00 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 12:05 AM

MUHALAB-1
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:30 AM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 2:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 4:30 PM
 RADHA -Telugu 4:30 PM
 RADHA -Telugu 7:15 PM
 SARKAR 3 - Hindi 7:15 PM
 RADHA -Telugu 10:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 10:00 PM
 NO THU+FRI+MON
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 AM

MUHALAB-2
 A FAMILY MAN 1:00 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 1:30 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 3:15 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 5:15 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 7:15 PM
 GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 9:30 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 12:05 AM

MUHALAB-3
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 1:15 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 3:45 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 6:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 9:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:30 PM

FANAR-1
 A FAMILY MAN 12:45 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 3:00 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 5:15 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 7:30 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 9:45 PM
 FAST & FURIOUS 8 12:05 AM

FANAR-2
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 1:15 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 3:00 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 5:00 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 7:00 PM
 GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 8:45 PM
 GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 11:15 PM

FANAR-3
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 PM
 SARKAR 3 - Hindi 3:00 PM
 BAAHUBALI 2: The Conclusion -Hindi 5:30 PM
 SARKAR 3 - Hindi 8:45 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:30 PM

FANAR-4
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 2:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 5:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 7:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 10:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 AM

FANAR-5
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 12:00 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 2:00 PM
 THE BOSS BABY 4:00 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 6:00 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 7:45 PM

YOU M IN AL AYAM 9:30 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 11:30 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 1:15 AM

MARINA-1
 A FAMILY MAN 11:45 AM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 2:00 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 4:00 PM
 HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM 6:00 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 8:00 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 10:15 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 12:30 AM

MARINA-2
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 3:00 PM
 THE BOSS BABY 5:30 PM
 GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 7:30 PM
 GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 10:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 AM

MARINA-3
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:30 AM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 2:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 4:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 7:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 9:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:05 AM

AVENUES-1
 A FAMILY MAN 12:15 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 2:30 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 4:45 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 7:00 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 9:15 PM
 A FAMILY MAN 11:30 PM

AVENUES-2
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD -3D-4DX 11:30 AM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD -3D-4DX 2:15 PM
 THE BOSS BABY -3D-4DX 5:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD -3D-4DX 7:15 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD -3D-4DX 10:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD -3D-4DX 12:45 AM

AVENUES-3
 THE BOSS BABY 11:30 AM
 THE BOSS BABY 1:30 PM
 THE BOSS BABY 3:45 PM
 THE BOSS BABY 6:00 PM
 THE BOSS BABY 8:15 PM
 FAST & FURIOUS 8 10:30 PM
 MONOLITH 1:15 AM

AVENUES-4
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:30 AM
 THE BOSS BABY 2:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 4:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 6:45 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 9:30 PM
 Special Show "KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD" 9:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:15 AM

AVENUES-5
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:45 AM
 FAST & FURIOUS 8 2:30 PM
 SARKAR 3 - Hindi 5:15 PM
 FAST & FURIOUS 8 8:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 11:00 PM

AVENUES-6
 MONOLITH 11:30 AM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 1:30 PM
 RADHA -Telugu 1:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 4:15 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 7:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 9:45 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 AM

360°- 1
 THE BOSS BABY 11:30 AM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 1:30 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD -3D 4:15 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 7:00 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD -3D 9:45 PM
 KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD 12:30 AM

360°- 2
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 12:00 PM
 YOU M IN AL AYAM 2:00 PM

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Asr: 15:20

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Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2017



Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Saturday 13/5/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10
JZR	553	Alexandria	00:15
SVA	514	Riyadh	00:25
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30
CLX	852	Luxembourg	00:35
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35
KAC	102	London	00:55
MSR	618	Alexandria	00:55
DLH	635	Doha	01:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40
RJA	642	Amman	01:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15
KAC	418	Manila	02:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:40
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15
KAC	544	Cairo	04:20
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50
BAW	157	London	06:05
KAC	204	Lahore	06:20
CLX	8675	Luxembourg	06:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
PAL	668	Manila	11:00
JZR	325	Al Najaf	11:10
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
JZR	239	Amman	12:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
IAW	157	Al Najaf	13:25
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	13:35
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
KAC	364	Colombo	14:15
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
KAC	352	Kochi	14:20
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	618	Doha	14:20
KAC	512	Mashhad	14:25
JZR	779	Jeddah	14:25
IRC	526	Mashhad	14:30
KAC	540	el-Sheikh	14:35
JZR	357	Mashhad	14:50
KAC	692	Muscat	14:55
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
KAC	562	Amman	15:10
OMA	645	Muscat	15:10
KAC	412	Bangkok	15:30
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
SAW	705	Damascus	15:50
RJA	640	Amman	16:00
FDK	801	Damascus	16:00
SVA	504	Madinah	16:00
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10
FDB	051	Dubai	16:15
QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
JZR	535	Cairo	16:20
JZR	125	Bahrain	16:25
KNE	531	Jeddah	16:35
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35
NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
KAC	118	New York	16:55
KAC	542	Cairo	17:05

IRA	669	Mashhad	17:10
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
JZR	177	Dubai	17:45
SVA	500	Jeddah	18:00
QTR	1080	Doha	18:05
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
CLX	856	Luxembourg	18:50
UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
KAC	744	Dammam	19:05
FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	174	Munich	19:25
KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30
JAI	572	Delhi	19:35
KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50
KAC	620	Doha	19:50
OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
KNE	381	Taif	20:10
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15
MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
JZR	189	Dubai	20:25
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
KAC	616	Bahrain	20:40
KAC	564	Amman	21:00
KAC	168	Paris	21:05
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:15
UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
FDB	8053	Dubai	21:25
KAC	676	Dubai	21:35
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
NIA	161	Cairo	22:10
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
KNE	533	Jeddah	22:45
JZR	241	Amman	22:55
JZR	185	Dubai	22:55
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
MSC	405	Sohag	23:30
FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
THY	764	Istanbul	23:45

Departure Flights on Saturday 13/5/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
PIA	240	Sialkot	01:00
MSC	502	Alexandria	01:05
JZR	502	Luxor	01:15
SVA	515	Riyadh	01:25
THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
KAC	363	Colombo	01:55
MSR	619	Alexandria	01:55
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
CLX	853	Luxembourg	02:05
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:35
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:50
THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
KKK	6505	Istanbul	02:55
KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30
OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	417	Manila	04:20
PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25
QTR	1077	Doha	05:35
RJA	643	Amman	06:25
THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	173	Munich	06:55
FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
KAC	167	Paris	07:15
JZR	238	Amman	07:15
JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
JZR	324	Al Najaf	07:45
KAC	613	Bahrain	07:55
CLX	8675	Hong Kong	08:00
BAW	156	London	08:20
FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	773	Riyadh	08:35
KAC	511	Mashhad	08:35
KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	08:40
JZR	778	Jeddah	08:50
KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	09:00
KAC	117	New York	09:00
JZR	356	Mashhad	09:00
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
KAC	691	Muscat	09:30
KAC	561	Amman	09:30
JZR	534	Cairo	09:30

ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
KAC	101	London	09:45
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
KAC	617	Doha	10:15
FDB	056	Dubai	10:25
KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
IRM	1189	Mashhad	11:10
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
VIZ	201	TQD	12:00
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
RBG	554	Alexandria	12:10
PAL	669	Manila	13:10
JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
JZR	124	Bahrain	13:30
THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
IAW	158	Al Najaf	14:25
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KNE	382	Taif	15:00
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
IRC	527	Mashhad	15:30
KAC	563	Amman	15:40
KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
JZR	188	Dubai	15:50
KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	619	Doha	16:00
KAC	743	Dammam	16:00
KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
SAW	708	KAC	16:50
MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:50
SVA	505	Madinah	16:55
FDK	802	Damascus	16:55
RJA	641	Amman	16:55
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
FDB	052	Dubai	17:05
KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
KNE	532	Jeddah	17:25
QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
JZR	552	Alexandria	17:25
KAC	615	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	240	Amman	17:30
KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	381	Delhi	17:50
NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:00
IRA	666	Esfahan	18:10
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
KAC	785	Jeddah	18:45
QTR	1081	Doha	19:15
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
SVA	501	Jeddah	19:30
MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
CLX	856	Hong Kong	20:20
FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
JAI	571	Delhi	20:35
KAC	353	Bangalore	20:55
KAC	1543	Cairo	21:00
DLH	634	Doha	21:00
OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
KNE	232	Riyadh	21:10
MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
KAC	301	Mumbai	21:40
QTR	1089	Doha	21:45
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:00
KAC	155	Istanbul	22:15
ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
KLM	445	Bahrain	22:25
FDB	8054	Dubai	22:25
KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
NIA	162	Cairo	23:10
KAC	783	Jeddah	23:10
QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
KAC	411	Bangkok	23:35

Wordsearch Puzzle

Baby

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 50 letters spell a secret message.

B O T T L E R L H J L P R O T I N O M
 Y D D A D S E U O T U A U I L L A M S
 H E T L C M H L Q O I M U C S W I N G
 T R A R T I T L D L R S P G Y E S C T
 M F E E D L E A I F Y D E E H P E O T
 O A S I L E E B E D L W O B R K P L M
 M A R K R I T Y O E H I G H C H A I R
 M P E T H R B B E B T R G U N I S C S
 Y O T R G P A O G E A E D I S I T S M
 T W S E T T A C M T Y R D F G P R O I
 S D O P N R O R T R E T P D B G O G L
 E E O A E E P L E B G A D L Y R L O K
 P R B I C L E S B N C I A E N B L E N
 I T A D O A R U I I T N C A R S E A T
 W S W I N U R Y F R K S N O Y I R A C
 T N A F N I R I A E I S E N O A T U R
 R H K E I C E S T A R F O R M U L A I
 S L E E P R H T E R A C N I K S S P B

- ALERT
- AWAKE
- BLANKET
- BODYSUIT
- BOOSTER SEAT
- BOTTLE
- BOWL
- CAR SEAT
- CARRIER
- COLIC
- CREAM
- CRIB
- CRYING
- DADDY
- DIAPER
- DROOL
- FEED
- FORMULA
- GIGGLE
- GRIN
- HIGHCHAIR
- HOODIE
- INFANT
- INNOCENT
- JUMPER
- LAUGH
- LULLABY
- MILK
- MOBILE
- MOMMY
- MONITOR
- NURSERY
- ONESIE
- PACIFIER
- PARENTS
- PLAY
- POWDER
- RASH
- RATTLE
- RUBBER DUCK
- SIPPY CUP
- SKIN CARE
- SLEEP
- SMALL
- SMILE
- SPOON
- STROLLER
- SWING
- TEDDY BEAR
- TEETHER
- TIRED
- WIPES

Yesterday's Solution

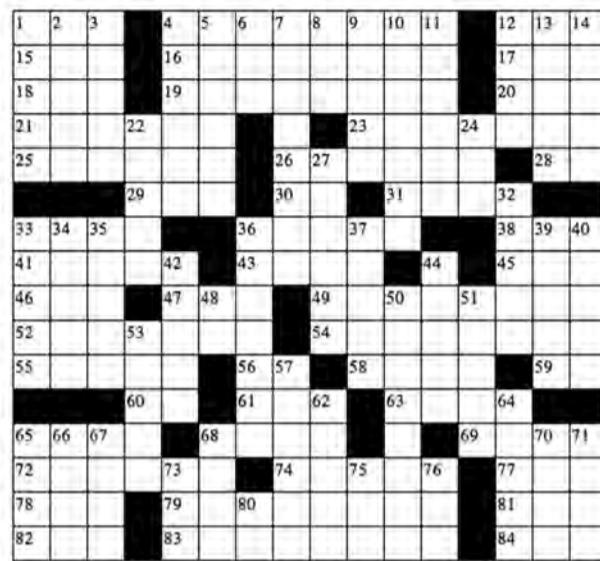
Autumn

L O N G E R N I G H T S N A A U C N
 T O R U E S T U N Y R O K C T H R I
 M S O A Y Q E N I S I A O T R W O K
 R C Y H N E U V S T E R F H E O P P
 C E A A C G K I A S N O A A B R S M
 K N D N D S E R N E D S R N M C O U
 S C Y L N R G L U O L P M K E E C P
 Q R A K E I E R E T X G I S V R T S
 U Y D T M A N T S A E F N G O A O E
 A D Y D S I V G R T V S G I N C B P
 S N R N G Y W E H O E E N V W S E T
 H I E L P P A E S P H A S I V O R E
 B W T Y L L R C T E S P N R F L M
 F T S E V R A H Y E L O I G C R E B
 A A U H A L L O W E E N E F I O S E
 A F L S E V A E L W O L L E Y S L R
 L O B L W E C H E S T N U T S T R D

- ACORN
- APPLE
- BIRD MIGRATION
- BLOWING LEAVES
- BLUSTERY DAY
- CANNING
- CHESTNUTS
- CHILLY
- COLD
- CROPS
- EQUINOX
- FALL
- FARMING
- FEAST
- FROST
- HALLOWEEN
- HARVEST
- HAYSTACK
- HICKORY NUTS
- LONGER NIGHTS
- NOVEMBER
- OCTOBER
- ORANGE LEAVES
- PIE
- PUMPKIN
- RAKE
- RED LEAVES
- SCARECROW
- SCHOOL
- SEASON
- SEPTEMBER
- SHORTER DAYS
- SQUASH
- SWEET POTATOES
- THANKSGIVING
- TURKEY
- WINDY
- YELLOW LEAVES

The hidden sentence is: AUTUMN IS A SECOND SPRING WHEN EVERY LEAF IS A FLOWER

CROSSWORD 1606



ACROSS

1. A vacuum tube in which a hot cathode emits a beam of electrons that pass through a high voltage anode and are focused or deflected before hitting a phosphorescent screen.
4. A cart that can be tilted to empty contents without handling.
12. The money risked on a gamble.
15. Legal document setting forth rules governing a particular kind of activity.
16. An ornamental but poisonous flowering shrub having narrow evergreen leaves and clusters of fragrant white to pink or red flowers.
17. (Babylonian) The sky god.
18. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
19. A gliding or sliding step in ballet.
20. The sign language used in the United States.
21. Dried root of two plants of the genus Polygala containing an irritating saponin.
23. Be a mystery or bewildering to.
25. A prosthesis that replaces a missing leg.
26. A proud stiff pompous gait.
28. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
29. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
30. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
31. East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
33. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
38. A federation of North American labor unions that merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1955.
41. A genus of Ploceidae.
43. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
45. An undergarment worn by women to support their breasts.
46. (prefix) Coming before or being preliminary or preparatory.
47. The law enforcement agency in the Justice Department.
49. Of or relating to or characteristic of Antigua or its people.
52. Someone who has had a limb removed by amputation.
54. Type genus of the Garrulinae.
55. Made of grated potato and egg with a little flour.
56. A radioactive metallic element that is similar to tellurium and bismuth.
58. Made of fir or pine.
59. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
60. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
61. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
63. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
65. By bad luck.
69. A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
72. Of or relating to or characteristic of Hades or Tartarus.
74. Coffee with the caffeine removed.
77. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
78. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
79. Somewhat steep.
81. A light touch or stroke.
82. A piece of furniture that provides a place to sleep.
83. The capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the Congo river opposite Brazzaville.
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A fastener (as a buckle or hook) that is used to hold two things together.
2. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.
3. A sharp vibrating sound (as of a plucked string).
4. Stubbornly unyielding.
5. The amount that a container (as a wine bottle or tank) lacks of being full.
6. Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
7. (Greek mythology) Daughter of Helios and mother of Ariadne.
8. The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.
9. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
10. An island in Antigua and Barbuda.
11. A ditch dug as a fortification having a parapet of the excavated earth.
12. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
13. Issue or terminate (in a specified way, state, etc.).
14. A major city of northeastern Oklahoma on the Arkansas river.
22. Either of two large African antelopes of the genus Taurotragus having short spirally twisted horns in both sexes.
24. Seed of a pea plant.
27. A motley assortment of things.
32. The capital and largest city of Afghanistan.
34. (Hinduism and Buddhism) The effects of a person's actions that determine his destiny in his next incarnation.
35. Having or showing knowledge and skill and aptitude.
36. A river that rises in Russia near Smolensk and flowing south through Belarus and Ukraine to empty into the Black Sea.
37. A gland in which gametes (sex cells) are produced.
39. Intentional deception resulting in injury to another person.
40. East Indian tart yellow berrylike fruit.
42. Located farther aft.
44. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
48. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
50. A wrongful interference with the possession of property (personal property as well as realty), or the action instituted to recover damages.
51. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
53. An edict of the Russian tsar.
57. Terrestrial game birds of the Old World and Australia.
62. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
64. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
66. A narrow way or road.
67. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
68. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
70. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
71. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
73. Inquire about.
75. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
76. The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.
80. Half the width of an em.

Yesterday's Solution

T A R P C H O K I N G M E D
 O P A L P A L E R M O A D E
 R A J A A K A B A D A G D A
 T R A N S E A K K A D I A N
 B A C C A B A R A
 I V R A D N U D N I C K
 N I T D S A N A A A R E A
 S C A M C A B B I A R P
 T U T E E L A H U P A T I O
 E N A N T H E M L U B E C K
 P A R A N A P A T A C A
 G A G A M R E S A L E
 B A B E C H I L I E D A M
 A B A S E R E N A D E O M B
 L E T I N I M I C A L P I E
 I D A B E D E C K E D T A D

Daily SuDoku

	2					5	1
		7					3
					8	2	6
		1	9	2		6	4
5							3
2	4			8	5	1	
4		8	5				
	1					3	
9	5						4

Yesterday's Solution

3	4	1	6	9	5	7	2	8
2	6	7	1	8	3	5	4	9
5	8	9	2	7	4	1	3	6
7	3	5	8	4	6	2	9	1
6	1	8	9	5	2	4	7	3
9	2	4	7	3	1	8	6	5
1	7	6	3	2	8	9	5	4
8	5	2	4	6	9	3	1	7
4	9	3	5	1	7	6	8	2

POLANCO THWARTS GREINKE NO-HIT BID

PHOENIX: Zack Greinke's bid for his first career no-hitter was thwarted by Pittsburgh's Gregory Polanco's leadoff home run in the eighth inning and the Arizona Diamondbacks held on to beat the Pirates 2-1 on Thursday night. Greinke (4-2), who dominated the Pirates with a vicious slider, allowed that one hit in eight innings. He struck out 11 and walked one. Fernando Rodney pitched a scoreless ninth for his ninth save in 11 tries. Greinke faced the minimum 21 batters through seven innings. Jordy Mercer led off the third with a walk but was thrown out trying to steal second. Gerrit Cole (1-4) allowed two runs and seven hits in seven innings. He struck out five and walked one. Pittsburgh has scored five runs total in Cole's last five starts.

ROCKIES 10, DODGERS 7

Jeff Hoffman struck out eight to earn his first major league win, Carlos Gonzalez showed signs of breaking out of a slump with a two-hit, three-RBI night and the Rockies held off the Dodgers. Ian Desmond and Nolan Arenado each added two doubles to help the Rockies extend their lead in the NL West to 2 1/2 games over the Dodgers. At 23-13, the Rockies are off to the best start in team history. Hoffman (1-0) allowed three runs over 5 1/3 efficient innings after being recalled from Triple-A Albuquerque earlier in the day. He becomes the latest rookie to shine this season on the mound for Colorado. Dodgers lefty Hyun-Jin Ryu (1-5) surrendered 10 runs, five earned, and walked six over four innings. He was reinstated from the disabled list before the game after recovering from a bruised hip.

RED SOX 4, BREWERS 1

Mookie Betts' three-run home run in the ninth inning lifted the Red Sox to a victory over the Brewers. It was Betts' fifth homer of the season and third in his last four games, and helped Boston salvage one win in the three-game series in the Red Sox's first trip to Milwaukee since 2003. Boston's right fielder enjoyed his time at Miller Park, as he went 7 for 11 with eight runs batted in and five runs scored. Milwaukee closer Neftali Feliz (0-4) came on in the ninth, but managed to get only one out. Red Sox pitcher Craig Kimbrel (2-0) got the final five outs as Boston snapped the Brewers' three-game winning streak.

ROYALS 6, RAYS 0

Major league ERA leader Jason Vargas went seven more scoreless innings, Salvador Perez had a two-run double during a five-run eighth inning and the Royals beat the Rays. Vargas (5-1) scattered three hits and dropped his ERA from 1.19 to 1.01. Jorge Bonifacio hit an RBI single off Diego Moreno in the decisive eighth before Whit Merrifield had a run-scoring single and then circled the bases when center fielder Kevin Kiermaier misplayed the hit for a three-base error. Merrifield also homered for the Royals, who won three of four against the Rays. Kansas City had lost 13 of 16 entering the series. Jake Odorizzi (2-2) gave up one run and four hits in six innings for the Rays. He had allowed three hits or fewer in each of his previous four starts.

ASTROS 3, YANKEES 2

Defensive replacement Jake Marisnick made a perfect throw from left field to nail Jacoby Ellsbury at the plate for the final out and the Astros held off the Yankees in a matchup between teams with the best records in baseball. Unbeaten Dallas Keuchel (6-0) became the first six-game winner in the majors, helped by a home run from Carlos Correa. The Astros won their fourth in a row and improved to 24-11 - their top mark after 35 games since the franchise began playing in 1962. Ken Giles wound up with his 10th save in 11 tries, saved by Marisnick. Ellsbury's single with two outs in the ninth inning put runners at the corners, and then the fleet leadoff hitter stole second. Gary Sanchez followed with a sharp RBI single to left and Marisnick, who came into the game in the seventh, fired a strike to catcher Brian McCann to get the sliding Ellsbury.

BLUE JAYS 7, MARINERS 2

Steve Pearce hit a three-run home run, Justin Smoak had a solo homer and finished with four RBIs, and the Blue Jays beat the Mariners, snapping Seattle's win streak at four. Marco Estrada (2-2) allowed two runs over six innings for the Blue Jays, who have won four of five. Smoak went 3 for 3 with a walk against his former team. He had an RBI single in the first, walked in the fourth, singled home two runs in the fifth, and connected off rookie Sam Gaviglio in the seventh. Mariners slugger Nelson Cruz hit a two-run homer but Seattle's offense came up empty after the first inning.

RANGERS 5, PADRES 2

Mike Napoli's second homer was a game-ending three-run shot and the Rangers beat the Padres. The Rangers had been held scoreless by San Diego starter Clayton Richard until Napoli hit a 433-foot homer to left

third of five Twins relievers, pitched a scoreless seventh inning for the win. Brandon Kintzler pitched the final five outs for his eighth save in nine chances. He struck out Omar Narvaez and Leury Garcia in the eighth with the tying run on third and go-ahead run on second. Chicago starter Derek Holland (3-3) permitted seven runs, but just three earned, and six hits in five innings in taking the loss. Four White Sox relievers followed with four hitless innings.

TIGERS 7, ANGELS 1

Justin Upton hit a three-run homer and Michael Fulmer pitched seven innings of three-hit ball in the Tigers' victory over the Angels. Mike Trout went 0 for 4 as the Angels' designated hitter after missing five straight games and six of the previous seven with a tight left hamstring. The two-time AL MVP hadn't played since last Friday, and his 17-game hitting streak



CALIFORNIA: Detroit Tigers first baseman Miguel Cabrera (left) and third baseman Nicholas Castellanos celebrate the team's 7-1 win over the Los Angeles Angels on Thursday, May 11, 2017. —AP

on the first pitch of the eighth inning. Napoli topped that with a 448-foot shot into the club-level seats higher in left field to end a four-run ninth off Padres closer Brandon Maurer (0-2). Elvis Andrus started the ninth-inning rally with a one-out single before Jonathan Lucroy followed with his third hit, looping a single that dropped just in front of diving center fielder Manual Margot. Rougned Odor then singled through the left side of the infield to drive home Andrus with the tying run and bring Napoli to the plate. Sam Dyson (1-4), the demoted Rangers closer, worked around two hits in a scoreless ninth.

TWINS 7, WHITE SOX 6

Eduardo Escobar hit a three-run homer then added a fourth RBI with a double as the Twins outlasted the struggling White Sox. Brian Dozier and Miguel Sano crushed solo shots and Joe Mauer singled in a run for Minnesota, which hung on to deal the White Sox a season-high fifth straight loss after jumping out to a 6-0 lead in the second inning. Melky Cabrera launched a three-run homer off Twins starter Phil Hughes in the fifth. Chicago's Matt Davidson drove in two runs, on a solo homer and a groundout. Ryan Pressly (1-2), the

ended. Andrew Romine hit a two-run homer as the Tigers got a rare win over the Angels in the opener of a four-game series at the Big A, where Detroit hasn't won a series in seven tries since August 2009. The Tigers improved to 7-23 against Los Angeles since September 2012.

REDS 3, GIANTS 2

Zack Cozart had two extra-base hits, including an RBI double in the top of the eighth inning that scored the game-winner, as the Reds defeated the Giants. The Reds won for the ninth time in 11 games and have won 15 of their last 20 games at AT&T Park going back to the 2012 NLDS. The Giants lost despite a four-hit game from center fielder Denard Span in his first game since coming off the disabled list. The Giants, who have an MLB-worst 12-24 record, lost for the sixth time in seven games and for the 10th time in their last 12. Cozart doubled to left center off Giants reliever Hunter Strickland (0-1) scoring Scooter Gennett, who tripled to right leading off the eighth inning. Wandy Peralta (2-0) pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings. He came into the game with two baserunners aboard and two outs in the bottom of the seventh and got Brandon Belt to fly out to left. —AP

ATHLETICS

JAMAICAN SPRINTERS BRACE FOR LIFE AFTER USAIN BOLT

SHANGHAI: Usain Bolt's imminent retirement is a blow for athletics, but a new generation of Jamaican sprinters is ready to try to fill his golden shoes, Olympic champions Elaine Thompson and Omar McLeod said yesterday. Thompson, the Olympic women's 100m and 200m champion, and 110m hurdles gold medallist McLeod will be among the marquee performers in today's Shanghai Diamond League competition, which will feature rematches of key Rio Games battles. Bolt, the greatest sprinter in history with eight Olympic golds, 11 world titles and three world records, will retire from international competition after the world championships in August.

"It's saddening that he's retiring, but there is nothing we can do to change his mind," McLeod said wistfully in Shanghai. "But what we can do, as young emerging Jamaican athletes, is shine our own lights and try our very best to keep the flag flying high." Thompson added: "He's a legend. He's done so much for the country. We can't be like him, but we can follow in his footsteps and motivate each other to continue to raise the flag higher."

In Shanghai, Thompson will face off in the 100m with America's Tori Bowie for the first time since they went one-two in Rio, where Thompson became the first woman since Florence Griffith-Joyner in 1988 to win the 100m-200m double. Jamaica's new sprint queen has been in good form this year but feels there is still "room for improvement" as she gears up for the world championships in London. "This is preparation for me to compete for the world championship. So I just have to stay focused," she said. The women's 100m also will feature Olympic and world long jump champion Tianna Bartoletta of the United States, and Jamaican two-time Olympic 200m champion Veronica Campbell-Brown.

Rio reprise

McLeod also has run well lately, clocking the fastest 110m-metre hurdles of the year two weeks ago—a 13.04sec—at the Drake Relays. He will line up alongside Spain's Orlando Ortega, who took Olympic silver last year, and a handful of others who have previously run sub-13 times including past world champion Aries Merritt of the United States.

In yet another Rio rematch, Brazilian Thiago Braz will vie with world record-holder Renaud Lavillenie of France in the pole vault. Braz stunned the Frenchman, the defending champion and hot favourite, last August to take gold with an Olympic record 6.03m in a memorable battle in which Lavillenie was mercilessly jeered by the home crowd. Speaking at a press conference in Shanghai, the 23-year-old Braz lavished praise on the older Frenchman as an inspiration for his own career. "I have a dream in my life. It is to be like him. He is the world record-holder," Braz said.

Sam Kendricks of the United States—last year's Olympic bronze medallist will round out the Rio pole vault podium, in one of the stronger event fields in Shanghai. Two-time Olympic champion David Rudisha, however, will be the clear favorite in the 800m, with no other Olympic medalists in the field. A number of top men's sprinters, including Rio 100m silver medalist Justin Gatlin of the United States, are skipping Shanghai, leaving a depleted field for the race. Gatlin finished a disappointing fourth at the season-opening Doha Diamond League last week, where unheralded South African Akani Simbine surprisingly outspurred a world-class field for the win. —AFP



Usain Bolt

CRICKET

ALI CENTURY ANCHORS CAUTIOUS PAKISTAN TO 376

ROSEAU: Azhar Ali's 14th Test century anchored Pakistan to a first innings total of 376 as the tourists batted with exaggerated care on the second day of the third and final Test against the West Indies on Thursday. Left to negotiate 11 overs to the close of play at Windsor Park in Dominica, the West Indies reached 14 without loss in reply.

Pakistan's innings occupied all of 146.3 overs at a scoring rate of just over two-and-a-half runs per over, a puzzlingly pedestrian rate of progress on a benign pitch, especially as victory would give Pakistan their first-ever Test series win in the Caribbean in eight attempts. After crawling along in the morning session, when only 58 runs came off 28 overs in two-and-a-half hours of play for the loss of Younis Khan's wicket, the tourists attempted to accelerate with captain Misbah-ul-Haq releasing the shackles of virtual strokelessness in getting to 59. Wicketkeeper-batsman Sarfraz Ahmed was by far the most enterprising of all in the Pakistan batting line-up though, being ninth out for 51 off 73 balls.

"We wanted to get over 400 but losing wickets in the afternoon caused us to lose a bit of momentum," Ahmed explained after the day's play. "I just went out there with a positive intent, looking to put the bowlers off and keep the score moving along." Off-spinner Roston Chase was the prime beneficiary of the visitors' belated attempt at acceleration, finishing with four for 103 while captain Jason Holder claimed three for 71, including two wickets off consecutive deliveries after tea that ended any reasonable prospect for Pakistan getting to a total in excess of 400.

Greater urgency

Chase ended Azhar Ali's eight-hour vigil just after lunch in bowling the opening batsman for 127 before adding the wickets

of Asad Shafiq and Misbah. Painfully slow at the start of his innings, the Pakistan skipper showed a greater degree of urgency through the afternoon, adding 51 and completing a 39th fifty in Test cricket. His intentions for the final session were obvious when he smashed leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo back overhead for four and then hoisted Chase for six over long-on.

But the bowler had the last laugh with the next delivery as an attempted reverse-sweep by Misbah gave wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich the opportunity to make amends for two earlier errors in the innings. While 84 runs came in the middle session of the day, it still could not adequately compensate for their bewilderingly slow rate of scoring in the morning when both Ali and Misbah seemed more intent on occupation of the crease than scoring runs. Unbeaten on 85 overnight

with the total at a promising 169 for two, Ali added 37 of the morning's 58 runs in getting to his 14th Test century and second in consecutive matches.

Yet it was not one of his more memorable efforts and by the time he fell, missing an attempted sweep at Chase, he had faced 334 balls and struck two sixes and eight fours. Misbah had come to the crease after Younis, who is also bowing out of international cricket after this match, was trapped leg-before by West Indies captain Jason Holder for 18 inside the first hour of a bright, sultry morning. He should have departed without scoring but for another error behind the stumps by Dowrich. Having put down Babar Azam off Bishoo the day before, the wicketkeeper was inexplicably wrong-footed and failed to hold on to a low chance to the exasperation of Holder the suffering bowler. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

ROSEAU, Dominica: Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the third and final Test between the West Indies and Pakistan at Windsor Park in Dominica on Thursday.

Pakistan 1st Innings (overnight 169 for 2)	8-322 (Shah), 9-367 (Ahmed), 10-376 (Abbas)
A. Ali b Chase	127
S. Masood c Holder b Chase	9
B. Azam c Powell b Joseph	55
Y. Khan lbw Holder	18
Misbah ul Haq c wkpr Dowrich b Chase	59
A. Shafiq c Singh b Chase	17
S. Ahmed c Hope b Bishoo	51
M. Amir b Holder	7
Y. Shah c Powell b Holder	0
M. Abbas stpd wkpr Dowrich b Bishoo	4
H. Ali not out	8
Extras (b-4, lb-6, nb-8, w-3)	21
Total (all out, 146.3 overs)	376
Fall of wickets: 1-19 (Masood), 2-139 (Azam), 3-177 (Younis), 4-241 (Ali), 5-274 (Shafiq), 6-311 (Misbah), 7-322 (Amir),	
West Indies 1st Innings	
K. Brathwaite not out	5
K. Powell not out	9
Total (0 wkt, 11 overs)	14
To bat: S. Hetmyer, S. Hope, V. Singh, R. Chase, S. Dowrich, J. Holder, D. Bishoo, A. Joseph, S. Gabriel	
Bowling: M. Amir 5-2-5-0, M. Abbas 3-1-2-0, Y. Shah 2-0-4-0, H. Ali 1-0-3-0.	

ONE HORSE RACES ABOUND, FROM BUNDESLIGA TO BULGARIA

ZURICH: It's a far cry from the Bundesliga's ultra-modern stadiums and multi-million euro teams to Bulgaria's more humble league, yet the two have one thing in common - predictability. Bayern Munich recently strolled to their fifth successive German title virtually unopposed, lifting the trophy with three matches to spare while Ludogorets Razgrad, not to be outdone, won the Bulgarian contest with five matches left to become champions for the sixth season in a row.

They are far from alone. Juventus are set to clinch a sixth successive Italian title while a number of smaller European leagues have become one-horse races with the same team winning almost every year, sometimes by an embarrassingly large margin. Celtic claimed a sixth straight Scottish league title with eight matches remaining; BATE Borisov have been champions in Belarus for the last 11 seasons and Olympiakos Piraeus have only twice failed to win the Greek Super League since 1996.

Salzburg, sponsored by the Red Bull energy drinks company, are on the point of winning the Austrian Bundesliga for the eighth time in 11 seasons while Maribor, having missed out last season, have just made it six out of seven in Slovenia. European

Professional Football Leagues (EPFL), the umbrella organization which groups the domestic leagues, says one of the problems is the way soccer's European governing body UEFA distributes its prize money from the Champions League. According to EPFL, when a team such as Basel, Borisov or Zagreb qualify for the group stage, the prize money they receive allows their revenue to dwarf that of their rivals.

EPFL fears the situation will get worse from 2018-19 when the Champions League prize money will be increased significantly and based on a club's past performances. A study by Spain's La Liga, seen by Reuters, predicted that some teams could receive more than double under the new system. For example, it calculated that Ukrainian club Dynamo Kiev's Champions League revenue would jump from 26.6 million euros (\$28.90 million) per season to 52.1 million in the new system. Portuguese club Porto's share would leap from 22.2 million euros to 59.1 million. But others say there is far more to it than that.

Business models

"The domestic leagues need to take a bit of responsibility," said Sean Hamil, director of the Birkbeck Sport Business Centre at the

University of London. "To attack UEFA for running a highly successful competition that generates a lot of revenue seems a bit misdirected. "The business models of the leagues are not sustainable, and that is reflected in the fact that long-term rational investors don't buy football clubs." He added that the leagues need to introduce a break-even rule similar to UEFA's own financial fair play policy to attract high-quality investors and said domestic dominance has always existed to some extent. Celtic won nine successive titles in the 1960s and 70s, as did rivals Rangers in the 1980s and 90s.

Ludogorets' run in Bulgaria has replaced the almost complete dominance of the two big Sofia clubs, CSKA and Levski, while Malmo, Real Madrid and Steaua Bucharest all strung together five successive titles in the 1980s. UEFA said it was well aware of the issue. "Competitive imbalance in Europe is a complex trend which is fuelled by many different factors, first and foremost the ever increasing gap between big leagues and clubs, and the rest of football," said UEFA in a statement to Reuters. "At UEFA we are constantly monitoring all trends that may exist in European football. The new protection of the game department was established specifically to identify and analyse such matters within

the football landscape, and we work diligently in order to tackle them."

More competitive

It can be argued that there are numerous examples of clubs who have taken part in the Champions League group stage and failed to establish domestic dominance, such as Russia's Rubin Kazan, currently ninth, and Romanian railway club FC Cluj. In some cases, big clubs such as Scotland's Rangers, Greek pair AEK Athens and Panathinaikos, Swiss side Servette or Steaua Bucharest have suffered financial or management problems, leaving an open goal for their rivals. Still, some leagues have moved away from the classic round-robin format in a bid to make them more competitive.

Analysts say other simple measures such as ending the January transfer window and imposing squad limits could help. Tiny Austrian side Altach have had a bitter taste of how difficult it can be to break the status quo. Incredibly, they led their league for much of the first half of the season but lost coach Damir Canadi, after he was lured to Rapid Vienna, and their top scorer Dimitri Oberlin. Oberlin, 19, was on loan from Salzburg who decided halfway through the season that they wanted him back. — Reuters

WNBA FINDING NEW WAYS TO TRY AND GROW OFF THE COURT

NEW YORK: Coming off one of the most successful seasons in WNBA history on and off the court, the league has found ways to try to bring in new fans. Whether streaming games on Twitter, partnering with FanDuel to offer daily fantasy sports or just having more games on television, the WNBA is growing. "I think the WNBA is doing a great job using multiple platforms to broaden their audience," ESPN broadcaster Rebecca Lobo said. "I see firsthand how my own kids consume sports, and streaming is the primary option for them. My oldest daughter had her own WNBA Live Access account last year because she wanted to watch different games than what I was watching via my app. It's a different world than the one I grew up in watching sports and I'm glad the WNBA understands that and markets to it." This year's changes come after the WNBA had its highest attendance in five seasons, record marks for WNBA digital, social media and retail and double-digit growth in television viewership on ESPN. Here is a look at a few initiatives that the WNBA has undertaken heading into its 21st season.

LIVE STREAMS

The WNBA announced last week that it would show 20 games a year on Twitter over the next few seasons. The games on Twitter are exclusive to the social media platform and aren't on local or national TV. Twitter is paying the WNBA an undisclosed amount to stream the games. It's the first women's sport to be live-streamed on Twitter. The inaugural game will be the Dallas Wings against the Phoenix Mercury on May 14.

FANTASY SPORTS

The WNBA is entering the daily fantasy sports market. The league announced a partnership with FanDuel on Thursday - the first time a women's professional sports league will be available in one-day fantasy games. FanDuel will be offering free WNBA contests in which participants can win regular-season courtside tickets and merchandise, among other things. The grand prize fan experience includes courtside seats to the WNBA Finals with a basketball legend. The site will also have its normal offerings of daily fantasy contests in which people can win money by picking a lineup of WNBA players and pitting them against other players. "We've seen fantasy sports as one of the most engaging ways for fans to interact with the game," WNBA chief operating officer Jay Parry said. "It's in line with our growth strategy and the announcement we made last week with Twitter. We see this as a way to engage with new fans and expose them to excitement to WNBA. We're happy that FanDuel recognized the potential and growing interest in women's sport."

ON-AIR

The WNBA will have more games on television this season with 222 local broadcasts. That's up about 31 percent from last season. NBATV will show 45 contests, four more than last year. ESPN will show 16 regular-season games as well as broadcast the entire playoffs for the second consecutive season. — AP



MADRID: Japanese tennis player Kei Nishikori drops his racket during his match against Spanish player David Ferrer on May 11, 2017. — AFP

NISHIKORI INJURY SENDS DJOKOVIC INTO SEMI-FINALS, HALEP ROLLS ON

MADRID: Novak Djokovic moved into the semi-finals of the Madrid Masters yesterday without hitting a ball as Kei Nishikori withdrew citing the recurrence of a wrist injury, tournament organizers said. The world number eight missed the Barcelona Open late last month due to the injury. Nishikori is now also a major doubt for the Rome Masters next week with 10 days to go until the start of the French Open.

"I will plan to play Rome, but we'll see," said the Japanese. "I cannot promise to play or pull out right now. "(The) French is more important." Djokovic will either renew his rivalry with Rafael Nadal or face Belgium's David Goffin in the last four today. In the Women's Madrid Open defending champion Simona Halep

cruised back into the final for the third time in four years with a 6-2, 6-3 over Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova.

Halep also thrashed the world number 22 two weeks ago in Stuttgart and there was never any danger of an upset as the Romanian reeled off five straight games to close out the opening set. Sevastova hinted at a fightback early in the second as she got out to a 3-0 lead. But Halep, who is also into the semi-finals of the women's doubles with compatriot Irina-Camelia Begu, showed no signs of lacking in energy as she bounced back in emphatic fashion to win the last six games for the loss of just 14 points. Halep with face on form Frenchwoman Kristina Mladenovic or Svetlana Kuznetsova in today's final. — AFP

GOLF

MCGIRT, HUGHES TIED FOR LEAD AT THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

PONTE VEDRA BEACH: Mackenzie Hughes and William McGirt fired identical 67s to take the co-lead after the first round of The Players Championship as Sergio Garcia aced No. 17 in his first event since winning the Masters. Alex Noren, of Sweden, Spain's Jon Rahm, JB Holmes and Chez Reavie shot four-under 68s and are one stroke back at the TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

"Very pleased. One of those days where I kept out of trouble," said Hughes, of Canada. "When I missed the greens I did it in the right spots and when I needed a par I was able to do it." South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen and Francesco Molinari of Italy head a list of 11 players who shot 69 and are two strokes off the lead. American Phil Mickelson, defending champion Jason Day of Australia, Rickie Fowler and Adam Scott of Australia are among those who shot 70 and are three strokes behind. Day, however, made three bogeys over his last four holes and had to settle for a two-under score.

World number one Dustin Johnson tops a large group at 71 that also includes German Bernhard Langer, who at 59 is the oldest player in the tournament. "My day is kind of summed up on the first hole when I one-hopped it into the flag and it came off the green and I made bogey," Johnson said. "That's just kind of how my day went. I could never really get any momentum. I hit some good shots then I would lip-out the putt." Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy, Justin Thomas, and Garcia all shot 73. Garcia's round was highlighted by a hole in one on the island hole No 17. Garcia is the second to achieve the feat in as many years following Willy Wilcox's previous ace on the par-three.

Hole in one

Garcia said it was nice to post an ace after getting off to a rocky beginning. He is just the eighth player to make a hole in one in Players Championship history. "The feeling was great," said Garcia, who won

the Masters last month. "I hit a good shot, but it can go there, it can go three yards past. I don't know, it can do anything. "It was nice to see it bounce and kind of spin back into the hole. Maybe because I needed it after the start I had.

"I think I wasn't quite in the tournament because of everything that's been going on after the Masters win and media and people congratulating you left, right and centre. "I felt like I was a little bit up in the clouds, and when I woke up, I was four over after six." McGirt had three birdies on the front nine and eagled both of the par-fives on the back nine to offset two bogeys. This is the fifth time McGirt has held the lead or a share of the lead after 18 holes, but he has yet to convert an opening round lead into a victory. Hughes had a solid round of five birdies and no bogeys. He is also a one-time winner, capturing the 2017 RSM Classic in October. David Toms (back) and Kevin Na (illness) withdrew from the tournament during Thursday's round. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum is shown by the LA2024 bidding committee to IOC Evaluation Commission and the media as part of their bid for the Los Angeles 2024 Summer Olympic Games. —AFP

OLYMPICS

VENUES ON SHOW AS OLYMPIC OFFICIALS INSPECT LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES: Iconic venues from across Los Angeles's sporting skyline took center stage on Thursday as a team of International Olympic Committee officials scrutinized the city's bid for the 2024 Olympics. Members of the IOC Evaluation Commission, visiting Los Angeles before heading to fellow host city candidate Paris next week, spent the day inspecting proposed venues on the second day of a three-day mission. A tour began at the famous Staples Center arena, the downtown home of the Los Angeles Lakers NBA team. IOC delegates and LA 2024 bid officials shot hoops on the court famously graced by the likes of Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal during the Lakers' most recent golden era. Later stops included the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, the historic centerpiece of the 1932 and 1984 Olympics also held in the city. The Coliseum would once again host athletics, the premier event of the games, and US track and field star Allyson Felix was on hand to greet delegates for Thursday's site visit. "One thing LA has a lot to offer from an athlete's point of view is the climate," Felix said. "It's a great place to have an awesome performance. The Coliseum is amazing. There's so much legacy there. Even though I wasn't born at the time of the '84 games, I grew up hearing stories from my parents, coaches, other athletes just how incredible it was.

'History is here'

"That history is here and we want to repeat that and have it again," added Felix, who is the only female track and field athlete in Olympic history to win six gold medals. The Coliseum, which is the temporary home of the Los Angeles Rams NFL team, was recently approved for a \$270 million privately-funded facelift, which is due to be completed in 2019. It is one of an array of existing venues that form the LA 2024 bid, which will require zero construction of facilities, according to officials. The Coliseum would also feature prominently in an innovative opening ceremony. Organizers have planned for the torch relay to proceed through the Coliseum before fans, then winding its way across the city to the new 80,000-seat NFL stadium where the traditional parade of nations will be staged. Olympic delegates meanwhile were dazzled by an array of Hollywood stars and billionaire business titans at a private dinner hosted by LA 2024 bid chief Casey Wasserman, officials confirmed on Thursday. Movie star Sylvester Stallone, basketball legend Bryant and opera singer Placido Domingo attended along with former Microsoft chief executive Steve Ballmer and Disney chief Bob Iger. Others in attendance included Snapchat chief executive Evan Spiegel and 21st Century Fox boss James Murdoch.

After completing its visit, the IOC team will head to Paris next week before issuing its reports on the two cities in July. The IOC will choose the hosts for the 2024 Olympics at a meeting in Lima in September. The bidding race has been dominated by recent intrigue over the possibility that the IOC may award both the 2024 and 2028 Games at the same time at September's vote in order to lock in two solid bids. Both Los Angeles and Paris officials have acknowledged the debate but each insist they are the best candidate to go first in 2024. "This week is our opportunity to focus on the core question," Wasserman said on Wednesday. "Why is LA-in 2024 — the right city?" —AFP

CHOPSTICK TIPS AS AUSSIE RULES WOO CHINESE FANS

SHANGHAI: Australia's biggest spectator sport, Aussie rules football, will attempt to win fans in China this weekend when Port Adelaide Power and the Gold Coast Suns play a "historic" competitive game in Shanghai. Sunday's game of Aussie rules—which is similar to Gaelic football, but is played with an oval ball—is described as the first time a major Western sports league has held a full-season fixture in China. Other leagues like American Football's NFL, and ice hockey's NHL, are also working to establish a fan base in the biggest potential market of all. But Aussie rules has a much lower international profile.

Port Adelaide's poster-boy for the venture is Chen Shaoliang, who last year became the first Chinese national to be signed by an Australian Football League (AFL) club. "Many Chinese people don't know about the AFL, so they may be curious," said Chen, whose shirt number is 88, sig-

nifying good fortune in China. "We want to convey the passion and team spirit that is unique and essential to Australian football. It will be a great occasion to get fans excited about the sport," he said at a press conference on Shanghai's historic riverfront Bund district.

The game is not an AFL initiative, but has been spearheaded by Port Adelaide. Australian media have speculated, however, that the project is motivated by a Chinese tycoon's desire to win over Australian authorities in a major corporate acquisition. The game's key Chinese sponsor is Shanghai real estate magnate Gui Goujie, who led a consortium that sought to purchase North Adelaide-based S. Kidman & Co, Australia's largest private landholder and a major beef producer. The bid was initially blocked by Australia's government on economic-security grounds, but a revised deal went through in December, sever-

al months after Gui's Shanghai CRED and Port Adelaide announced plans for Sunday's match.

Culture club

North America's National Basketball Association (NBA) holds pre-season exhibition games in China, while the US National Football League (NFL) is reported to be considering a regular-season game in the country. The Melbourne Demons and Brisbane Lions held an AFL exhibition match in 2010 in Shanghai, but Sunday's match is the first played for premiership points outside Australia and New Zealand. Australia's The Age newspaper last week reported that the teams have engaged advisors to coach players on Chinese etiquette to avoid any embarrassing culture clashes, ranging from tips on using chopsticks to dealing with hierarchy. —AFP

MOTOR RACING

HAMILTON FASTEST AS MERCEDES DOMINATE

BARCELONA: Lewis Hamilton set the pace in Spanish Grand Prix practice yesterday as Formula One world champions Mercedes responded to the challenge of Ferrari with aerodynamic upgrades and consistently quicker times. With the championship finely balanced after four long-haul races, Mercedes turned up at the Circuit de Catalunya with a car whose revised features drew appreciative and apprehensive murmurs around the paddock. It appeared to be to triple champion Hamilton's liking, with the Briton on top of the timesheets in the morning with a best lap of one minute 21.521 seconds and then fastest again in the afternoon in 1:20.802.

His times were respectively a mere 0.029 and 0.090 quicker than those of Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas. Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen was third in both sessions but cut his morning deficit of nearly a second down to 0.310 after lunch. Championship leader Sebastian Vettel was fourth on the timesheets, 0.418 off the pace in the second session, with the German also suffering an early problem that halted his Ferrari at the pitlane exit. "There's something broken," the German, who leads Hamilton by 13 points, said over team radio. "There's an issue with the gearbox". The car was pushed back to the garage and Vettel reappeared on track just over half an hour later.

Angry Alonso

Spain's double world champion Fernando Alonso endured far more frustration, with his McLaren again breaking down before he had set a time in the morning. He was also slowest in the afternoon. McLaren blamed an oil leak from the Honda engine, evident to all with liquid spilling out of the tipping car as it was winched away by a crane. "The engine blew up after one corner. It's the way it is, we miss the first session. I'm sorry for the fans," said the Spaniard, who failed to start the previous race in Russia due to a breakdown on the formation lap.

"It's tough but it's more tough for McLaren, who brings updates trying to find a millisecond here and there and we cannot even run." Alonso is due to head straight to Indianapolis after tomorrow's race, missing the Monaco Grand Prix so he can compete in the Indy 500 on the same day. On the team's current form, it will come as a relief-with paddock jokers already wondering what other sporting events he might want to enter to delay his return. —Reuters



MONTMELO: Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain steers his car during the first practice session for the Spanish Formula One Grand Prix at the Barcelona Catalunya racetrack in Montmelo yesterday. — AP



HOUSTON: Houston Rockets guard James Harden (13) and San Antonio Spurs guard Danny Green chase a loose ball during the second half in Game 6 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series on Thursday, May 11, 2017. — AP

SHORT-HANDED SPURS HUMILIATE HOUSTON

LOS ANGELES: The San Antonio Spurs humiliated the Houston Rockets Thursday with a 114-75 game six closeout win that brought James Harden's MVP-worthy season to a startling halt. LaMarcus Aldridge paced the offense by scoring 34 points for the short-handed Spurs, who routed the Rockets despite the absence of top scorer Kawhi Leonard and star guard Tony Parker.

"Everybody picked it up. It wasn't one guy scoring 40 points," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich. "They played well at the offensive end with a lot of sense and defensively it was one of our best nights." San Antonio won the second-round series in six games and punched their ticket to the Western Conference playoff finals against the Golden State Warriors, which kicks off on Sunday. Harden's baffling performance in front of a Houston crowd of 18,050 at the Toyota Center arena was almost as big a stunner as the Spurs' winning a NBA playoff elimination contest by a whopping 39 points. The Rockets 75 points was second-lowest in a game during the Harden era.

And the Spurs didn't need Parker (torn left quadriceps) or Leonard (sore left ankle) to do it. Jonathon Simmons added 18 points in place of Leonard, while Patty Mills chipped in 14

points and seven assists. Pau Gasol tallied 10 points with 11 rebounds for San Antonio, which trailed 5-4 in the first quarter before coasting to the win. San Antonio shot 53 percent from the field, compiled a 60-37 rebounding advantage and limited Houston to 28 percent shooting. "They feel as bad as I do. It is going to hurt and linger," said Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni.

Harden was a non-factor Thursday after finishing second in scoring during the season at 29.1 points per game. He did not attempt a shot until the 6:19 mark of the second quarter. Harden accepted some of the blame for the loss. "I just didn't have rhythm," Harden said. "I was making passes and we didn't knock down shots. It falls on my shoulders. It is tough, especially the way we lost at home." By halftime Harden had as many points as turnovers (five each), and just two field-goal attempts at the intermission.

Harden finished with 10 points on two-of-11 shooting with seven assists and six turnovers. Trevor Ariza paced Houston with 20 points, and Clint Capela had 15 points and 12 boards. Asked if Harden was injured, D'Antoni said, "He's been battling that cold, but nothing I know of. I don't want to litigate what just happened." — AFP

LEBRON AND DURANT MOVING TOWARD NBA FINALS REUNION

OKLAHOMA: Kevin Durant admires LeBron James from afar, marveling at how Cleveland's main man finds ways to elevate his game at age 32 - year after year, title after title. Kobe Bryant was much the same. Ten years into his NBA journey, the unassuming, scoring machine everyone calls "KD", strives to emulate those superstars. Soon, he will likely see James again in the Finals, this time in a matchup that has been talked about from the very moment Durant departed Oklahoma City to join Golden State last July.

The anticipation of this potential matchup has overshadowed other postseason series. Durant understands that like LeBron and

Kobe, it's time to take his game to another level. They each have something Durant wants. "It's a mindset, when you don't realize how old you are or how many years you've played or mileage or the moment," Durant said. "You've just got to try to keep getting better. You have that mindset when you step on the court that you want to be the best player on the court. It may not happen every game. You may not be the best, you might not have the best game, but just having that mindset you never get satisfied with what you do.

"That's the mindset he (James) has taken on, that's the mindset Kobe did. There's a lot of other players that did it. I feel like I'm on

the same path as far as - I wouldn't say I'm going to have four MVPs or three championships, I'm not guaranteeing that but I want that. On the basketball court, I want to be consistent and great every night." James and Durant have squared off 23 times during their NBA careers, and James has a decisive 18-5 edge, including 4-1 in the postseason and 1-0 in battles for the championship. Now the basketball world is watching and waiting, even hoping for a Durant-James rematch. And this one could live up to the hype. After swatting aside their opponents in the first and second rounds, the Cavaliers and Warriors stand an unblemished 16-0 com-

bined as they await their conference finals opponents. The 3-Match. Another must-see, best-of-seven series featuring arguably the league's best players in James and Durant - both playing some of the best basketball of their careers - and a marquee All-Star cast that includes two-time MVP Stephen Curry, Kyrie Irving, Draymond Green, Klay Thompson and Kevin Love. It's a showdown made in hoops heaven, but Durant is downplaying a matchup with James as anything worthy of stealing the spotlight from the others. "If we do end up making it to the Finals and Cleveland makes it to the Finals, it's never going to be me versus LeBron," Durant said. — AP

FIVE THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN BUNDESLIGA

BERLIN: Bayern Munich and RB Leipzig meet in a top-of-the-table clash, unrest rattles Borussia Dortmund while the battle avoid relegation rages on. Here are five things to look for in the Bundesliga today:

Score to settle

Ralph Hasenhuettl says his RB Leipzig have a score to settle at home to Bayern Munich. Second-placed Leipzig were drubbed 3-0 in Munich last December and want revenge at the Red Bull Arena. Both RB and 2016/17 Bundesliga winners Bayern have qualified for next season's Champions League, but pride is at stake "There couldn't be a better opponent to motivate us and to settle a score from the first match," said Hasenhuettl. "They will want to demonstrate their supremacy and will certainly be at their best." Leipzig hope to have defender Willi Orban fit after an ankle injury. Bayern will field third-choice goalkeeper Tom Starke with Manuel Neuer (foot) and Sven Ulreich (elbow injured), while defender Javi Martinez is out with a fractured collarbone.

Friction in Dortmund

Borussia Dortmund are at Augsburg with speculation raging that head coach Thomas Tuchel may quit at the end of the season. CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke has said their relationship is strained over the decision to play their Champions League quarter-final first-leg a day after a bomb attack on their team bus last month. Tuchel, 43, complained after the 3-2 defeat by Monaco that he had not been involved in the decision "at all", but Watzke has said that is not true. "The rumors are spreading, but I'm not commenting on them at the moment, because I am concentrating with my team on the last few weeks," said Tuchel, who has a contract until June 2018. Third-placed Dortmund must beat Augsburg in their quest for a direct Champions League place as they are two points ahead of Hoffenheim.

All eyes on Europe

Both teams are in the running for European places when Werder Bremen host Hoffenheim. Fourth-placed

Hoffenheim lag behind Dortmund in their hunt for a Champions League place. Bremen, eighth, are just a point from a Europa League spot—an amazing turn around having been one place off the relegation places in mid March. "We have achieved our big goal, anything else is just sensational," said head coach Alexander Nouri, who is relieved to keep Bremen up. Werder have dead-ball expert Zlatko Junuzovic and veteran striker Claudio Pizarro fit again after missing training on Wednesday.

Relegation battle rages

After narrowly avoiding the dreaded drop in 2014 and 2015, this is the third time in six years that Hamburg are battling relegation. They are the only team in Germany's top tier to have never been relegated from the Bundesliga. "Despite the situation we have to trust ourselves and not just boot the ball upfield," said Hamburg's ex-Germany midfielder Aaron Hunt. With two games left, the relegation fight will go to the wire. Ingolstadt, who have 30 points, are 17th, an automatic relegation spot, and are four points behind Hamburg in 16th place, which carries a two-legged relegation play-off at the end of the season. And Mainz, 15th, are level on 34 points with Hamburg, but out of the relegation places on goal difference.

Darmstadt bow out

Head coach Torsten Frings is demanding bottom-side Darmstadt go out with a bang when they host sixth-placed Hertha Berlin in their last Bundesliga home match before relegation. Last weekend's 1-0 defeat at Bayern confirmed Darmstadt's drop. Pal Dardai's Berlin must beat Darmstadt to stay on course for a Europa League place, but Frings has other ideas. "Of course, there will be sadness and it will be an emotional game, but like in the last few weeks, we will give it our all and give nothing away," insisted the ex-Germany midfielder. "We have already shown we can beat teams at that level," he added after wins over Schalke, Hamburg and Freiburg in April. — AFP

German Bundesliga table

BERLIN: German Bundesliga table before Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Bayern Munich	32	23	7	2	80	17	76—champions
RB Leipzig	32	20	6	6	60	32	66
Borussia Dortmund	32	17	9	6	67	36	60
Hoffenheim	32	15	13	4	59	34	58
Freiburg	32	14	5	13	40	55	47
Hertha Berlin	32	14	4	14	39	41	46
Cologne	32	11	12	9	47	40	45
Werder Bremen	32	13	6	13	55	55	45
Moenchengladbach	32	12	7	13	42	46	43
Schalke 04	32	11	8	13	43	38	41
Eintracht Frankfurt	32	11	8	13	32	37	41
Bayer Leverkusen	32	10	7	15	45	51	37
Augsburg	32	9	9	14	34	50	36
VfL Wolfsburg	32	10	6	16	32	49	36
Mainz 05	32	9	7	16	40	51	34
Hamburg	32	9	7	16	30	59	34
Ingolstadt 04	32	8	6	18	34	55	30
Darmstadt 98	32	7	3	22	26	59	24—relegated

ITALIAN PREVIEW

TOTTI COMMITTED AS JUVENTUS TARGET TITLE CLINCHER AT ROMA

LUIGIANE: Retirement-bound Francesco Totti said he remains focused on helping Roma secure a top-two finish despite the prospect of watching from the bench when they bid to stop Juventus securing the Serie A title tomorrow. The 40-year-old Totti ended months of speculation over his future by confirming this week he is ready to work alongside sporting director Monchi when he hangs up his boots at the end of the month.

Known as 'Il Re di Roma' (King of Rome) for the best part of a career spent entirely with Roma, Totti will be given a farewell worth of royalty when they host Genoa on his swansong on May 28. Despite a decidedly underwhelming end to a storied career that has been overshadowed by sporadic, cameo appearance on the bench and disagreements with club officials, Totti says he remains committed to the cause. "We have Juventus against Roma tomorrow, that's all I'm thinking about because we want to fight all the way to the end in this championship, and Roma comes first," said Totti.

"There will be plenty of time to talk (about me) afterwards."

With a seven-point lead on Luciano Spalletti's hosts and three games remaining, Juventus need just a point at the Stadio Olimpico to secure a record sixth consecutive 'scudetto', and the first trophy of a targeted treble. Massimiliano Allegri's men face Lazio in the Italian Cup final on May 17 before focusing on Real Madrid in the Champions League final on June 3. But Allegri is keen to make sure Juve get the job finished quickly. "We'll go into the final looking to win, but in the meantime we can't forget we need a point against Roma. Otherwise, it will come down to our (next) game against Crotona," he said.

Roma are without striker Edin Dzeko, who leads Serie A on 27 goals, as he recovers from a calf strain and are still sweating on midfielder Radja Nainggolan. The thought of Totti retiring, meanwhile, is difficult to swallow for Roma captain Daniele De Rossi. "What he's going through right is painful for me because I know it will soon be over for him," said De Rossi, who has played alongside Totti for nearly 17 seasons. — AFP

SWISS LEAGUE PONDERES CHANGES AS BASEL DOMINANCE ENDURES

ZURICH: FC Basel's dominance of Swiss football, aided by lucrative revenue streams from Champions League appearances, has forced the country's domestic league to explore new formats that might make the season less predictable. Claudius Schaefer, CEO of the Swiss Football League (SFL), told Reuters he feared looming changes to the distribution of Champions League revenue could entrench Basel's supremacy further still. Basel this year won their eighth successive league title, wrapping it up with six games to spare. "The most important thing in the championship is the competitive balance," Schaefer said in an interview. "If you have the same champions eight times in a row, you have to be worried, so we are looking into reforms."

Schaefer said Basel were a well-managed club who deserved their success. "They haven't had the owners or president changing every couple of years like some other clubs," he said. "It's too simple to argue that FC Basel are where they are only because of the UEFA payments." But he said the money the club pocketed from its European forays gave them a clear advantage in a league where the average revenue, according to a UEFA benchmarking report is, 21.1 million euros (\$22.93 million) per season. Basel have played in the Champions League group stage six times since 2008, earning 17.85 million euros from their participation in 2014-15 alone.

Split winnings?

Schaefer said this amount would rise dramatically under a new Champions League format which will come into effect in 2018. He calculated Basel could earn around 40 million euros each season that they qualify from 2018-19. "This is a little less than the (entire) budget for our second biggest club Young Boys." Basel said they did not wish to comment on the matter. Playing Champions League football has also allowed Basel to showcase young talent such as Breel Embolo, sold to Schalke 04 last year.

"I don't think Embolo could have been transferred for 25 or 30 million euros to Schalke without playing in the Champions League," he said. The Swiss league, which has 10 clubs who play each other four times a season, is a world away from the major European leagues, with average attendances of under 10,000. Schaefer said the SFL would distribute a total 40 million Swiss francs (\$39.70 million) to the first and second division clubs from television and marketing next season, double the current amount but only a fraction of what bigger leagues pay. He said he hoped it would be possible to persuade UEFA to reconsider the changes planned for the 2018-21 Champions League cycle. — Reuters

Italian Serie A table

MILAN: Italian Serie A table ahead of the weekend matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Juventus	35	27	4	4	71	23	85
Roma	35	25	3	7	79	32	78
Napoli	35	23	8	4	81	36	77
Lazio	35	21	7	7	70	42	70
Atalanta	35	19	8	8	59	40	65
AC Milan	35	17	8	10	52	42	59
Inter Milan	35	17	5	13	63	44	56
Fiorentina	35	15	11	9	57	49	56
Torino	35	12	14	9	65	56	50
Sampdoria	35	12	10	13	45	49	46
Udinese	35	12	8	15	44	49	44
Chievo	35	12	6	17	39	54	42
Cagliari	35	12	5	18	48	67	41
Sassuolo	35	11	7	17	47	55	40
Bologna	35	10	8	17	36	52	38
Genoa	35	8	9	18	34	59	33
Empoli	35	8	8	19	26	55	32
Crotone	35	7	7	21	30	54	28
Palermo	35	4	8	23	30	7420	- relegated
Pescara	35	2	8	25	32	7614	- relegated

FORGET ALLARDICI, SAM'S THE 'PREMIER LEAGUE HOUDINI'

LONDON: Sam Allardyce once mused that if he had been called 'Allardici' it might all have been so different, and given the chance to manage Real Madrid or Inter Milan he was sure he would have the medals to accompany the fashionable continental sheen. Alas for 'Big Sam', when he finally did land his long-awaited glamorous chance as England's manager last year, he lost the job in undignified circumstances after only 67 days amid controversy and a newspaper sting. So it was his lot then to throw himself back at the grindstone, back to the unglamorous role that had defined his managerial name in the first place.

Not flashy 'Allardici', a manager who always fancied he would have been a serial winner at the Bernabeu or San Siro, but once again good old 'Fireman Sam', the Midlander that unfancied, struggling Premier League clubs turn to when deep in the mire. Tomorrow, if he can steer Crystal Palace to a point from the basement showdown with Hull City, Allardyce will once again have protected his record of never having suffered relegation from the Premier League. Considering the other clubs he has overseen-Bolton Wanderers, Newcastle United, Blackburn Rovers, West Ham United and Sunderland-and often the difficult circumstances in which he took charge, this feat tells of his considerable strengths.

In 2002-03 at Bolton, he avoided relegation with a final-day win. In 2008, he took over at Blackburn in December when they were 19th. Sunderland were second bottom last season when he arrived to bail them out. Now, it is Palace who are grateful to have Allardyce on board, even if it has been a curious adventure, ricocheting between the abysmal and the exhilarating, since he took the helm of Alan Pardew's sinking ship just before Christmas. Allardyce said he had been a "fool" when his brief England reign had ended by mutual agreement three months earlier after he had been filmed allegedly offering advice on how to "get around" FA transfer rules.

Yet the 62-year-old is nobody's fool when it comes to rescuing lost causes and even though he lost six of his first eight league matches in charge, once his familiar hallmarks of shrewd signings, clever man management, intensive training and tactical nous kicked in, the makeover was extraordinary. Palace won six of their next eight, including wholly improbable victories at table-topping Chelsea and Liverpool and a 3-0 home win over Arsenal hailed as arguably the club's finest Premier League showing. All this featured excellent performances from three key Allardyce signings-Luka Milivojevic, Mamadou Sakho and Jeffrey Schlupp. Up front, Allardyce freed the talent of Wilfried Zaha as Christian Benteke rediscovered his confidence.

Even their recent alarming three-match losing slump cannot quite persuade Eagles fans that Allardyce will not be the safest pair of hands around for Sunday's huge fixture. Palace chairman Steve Parish has praised his remarkable influence, noting after the preposterous win at Chelsea: "Sam's management style is very inclusive, he builds a team around him that do all the right things. He's worked incredibly hard." The England debacle may well mean it is too late for Allardyce to be given the chance to be the serial winner he always thought he could be given the right tools. — Reuters

SILVA SERVICE KEY TO MAN CITY'S CHAMPIONS DREAM

MANCHESTER: David Silva's comeback from injury helped inspire Manchester City's return to form last weekend, and his fitness is likely to prove crucial to their Champions League qualification prospects. Silva, back from a fortnight out with a knee injury, was superb as City beat an inept Crystal Palace 5-0, for only their third win in nine Premier League matches.

That victory has left Pep Guardiola's side fourth going into today's home match against Leicester City, with a three-point lead over fifth-placed Arsenal and only the top four at the end of the season qualifying for the Champions League. Sergio Aguero is making progress in his recovery from a groin injury, although it may be too soon for him to make a comeback. In any case, City's front three of Raheem Sterling, Gabriel Jesus and Leroy Sane were in fine form without him last Saturday, aided by the creativity of Silva and Kevin De Bruyne.

Seven points from their final three matches will guarantee City's place in next season's Champions League, a target they would be more than hopeful of achieving given that the Leicester game is followed by matches against West Bromwich Albion and Watford, both out of form. Then again, reigning English champions Leicester were struggling when City visited the King Power Stadium in December, yet Jamie Vardy was still able to score a hat-trick in a 4-2 home victory.

Professional Caballero

Guardiola's side do look a little more settled now, though, with Vincent Kompany's return to fitness giving the defense a much more solid look. Kompany, troubled by a series of injury problems over the last three years, has completed 90 minutes in each of City's last five matches, suggesting that his troubles may finally be behind him. City manager Guardiola is without first-choice goalkeeper Claudio Bravo, out for the rest of the season with a calf injury, but his absence hasn't hurt his team's prospects unduly, given the Chile international's erratic displays.

Willy Caballero's fine save from



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola applauds the fans following the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Crystal Palace at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester. Manchester City won the match 5-0. —AFP

Christian Benteke in the first half against Palace showed he is a more than able deputy, and he will continue for the season's final three games. Caballero had a run of Premier League matches for City between January and early April when Bravo was dropped, and remained philosophical when the former Barcelona goalkeeper was then recalled. "I tried to be focused when Claudio started to play again and I trained well," said Caballero. "I kept my professionalism.

"Unfortunately he probably can't play until next season but I trained really hard for this opportunity." Leicester have assured their safety in the Premier League with 22 points gained in 10 domestic games since Craig Shakespeare took charge following the surprise sacking of title-winning manager Claudio Ranieri. But the current Foxes boss will have to complete his audition for a longer-term contract without midfielder Danny Drinkwater, who has been ruled out for the rest of the season. Shakespeare could also face a crisis in central defense, where Robert Huth is a major doubt with a foot injury and cap-

tain Wes Morgan's hamstring problem will rule him out again. "Drinkwater has a thigh strain and I don't expect him to play again this season," said Shakespeare. "We need to give him time to get over it but it's weeks rather than months." — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timing)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Man City v Leicester City	14:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Middlesbrough v Southampton	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 8
Bournemouth v Burnley	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 12 EN
Sunderland v Swansea City	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Stoke City v Arsenal	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Espanyol v Valencia	17:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Osasuna v Granada	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 3
ITALIAN LEAGUE		
ACF Fiorentina v SS Lazio	19:00	beIN SPORTS
Atalanta v AC Milan	21:45	beIN SPORTS

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Werder Bremen v Hoffenheim	16:30	beIN SPORTS
SC Freiburg v FC Ingolstadt 04	16:30	beIN SPORTS
Bayer 04 Leverkusen v Koln	16:30	beIN SPORTS
Schalke 04 v Hamburger SV	16:30	beIN SPORTS
Wolfsburg v Monchengladbach	16:30	beIN SPORTS
FSV Mainz 05 v Eintracht Frankfurt	16:30	beIN SPORTS
FC Augsburg v Borussia Dortmund	16:30	beIN SPORTS
SV Darmstadt 98 v Hertha Berlin	16:30	beIN SPORTS
RB Leipzig v Bayern Munich	16:30	beIN SPORTS

WENGER AIMS TO SILENCE CRITICS WITH EURO PUSH

STOKE-ON-TRENT: There is nothing Arsene Wenger relishes more than confounding his doubters and the Arsenal manager will know today whether he has a strong chance of doing so once again. Wenger's side travel to Stoke having boosted their chances of qualifying for the Champions League - a task that looked a lost cause just a few weeks ago by winning 2-0 at Southampton on Wednesday.

That left Arsenal in fifth place in the Premier League, three points behind Manchester City in the slot directly above. City will have played their home game with West Bromwich Albion by the time Arsenal kick off at Stoke, but a Gunners victory is sure to stoke up the pressure on Liverpool, who are currently in third. Jurgen Klopp's side are four points better off than Arsenal, but crucially have played one fixture more than City

and the Gunners, and are at West Ham tomorrow.

But while Wenger cannot wait to say 'told you so' to his critics Gunners defender Shkodran Mustafi is still concerned his team may have left it a little too late. "I wish we found that before," he said of Arsenal's recent revival. "But now we have three games and we have to give everything to try and get everything out of all the games. Hopefully at the end we'll reach our goals." Arsenal will finish the campaign with home games against relegated Sunderland and then Everton, but first they must focus on ending their poor run at Stoke. Although they have not won there since 2010, losing on four of their eight visits, Wenger's men will be hopeful of ending that sorry sequence so long as Alexis Sanchez is in the team.

Concentrate

The Chile star scored at Southampton to being his Premier League goal tally for the season to 20, and 14 of those have been in away games. "I think it will give us hope, because if we keep the pressure on the other teams, maybe they will have an unlucky game or drop points somewhere," Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech said. "We need to make sure we are ready to take advantage of that. We concentrate on our games, we go game-by-game and we have to win all of them to give ourselves a chance. Then we will see what happens." Arsenal will be facing a Stoke side with just one win from their last nine games, yet City manager Mark Hughes is confident his players will rise to the occasion. "It's going to be a good atmosphere, it always is when Arsenal come to town," Hughes said. — AFP

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2017

Kuwait Times 55

Sports



Short-handed Spurs humiliate Houston

45



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Jesse Lingard (centre) is fouled by Celta's Pablo Hernandez (left) during the Europa League semifinal second leg soccer match between Manchester United and Celta Vigo on Thursday, May 11, 2017. — AP

UNITED, AJAX SQUEEZE INTO EUROPA FINAL

MANCHESTER: Manchester United survived a sizeable scare to reach their first Europa League final after a nervy 1-1 draw with Celta Vigo on Thursday completed a 2-1 aggregate victory. Jose Mourinho's side will play a youthful Ajax team in the final at Stockholm's Friends Arena on May 24, when they can complete their trophy collection and—perhaps more importantly—book a place in next season's Champions League.

Ajax advanced to their first European final in 21 years despite a 3-1 defeat to Lyon in France, the Dutch side progressing 5-4 on aggregate. Marouane Fellaini's 17th-minute header put United 2-0 up on aggregate, but Celta hit back late on through Facundo Roncaglia, who was then sent off along with United's Eric Bailly following a centre-circle shoving contest. "We suffered until the end and it was open until the last second," United manager Mourinho told BT Sport. "After 14 matches we are in the final. If we win the Europa League I am more than happy. It would be amazing."

Mourinho will have to do without influential centre-back Bailly, whose suspension leaves Chris Smalling, Phil Jones and Daley Blind as United's only available central defenders. With Mourinho having publicly abandoned hope of a top-four fin-

ish in the Premier League, after his side fell four points off the Champions League berths, United's season would have effectively been over had they gone out. Instead they have a chance to add a second big trophy to the League Cup won in February and allow Mourinho to end a complicated maiden campaign as manager by winning the fourth major European honour of his career.

Appearing in their first European semi-final, Eduardo Berizzo's Celta gave United several uncomfortable moments and there was panic in the hosts' box during the fraught closing stages. Both managers reverted to the teams that had started last week's first leg, which meant a United return for Paul Pogba, whose world-record transfer from Juventus is being investigated by FIFA. United started shakily, with Blind looking particularly uncertain, and there were early murmurs of concern around Old Trafford when Iago Aspas cut in from the right and obliged Sergio Romero to tip his rasping shot over.

Lyon go close

An audacious juggling show from Pogba roused the crowd and United tightened their grip on the tie when Marcus

Rashford's sumptuous cross from the left was headed in at the back post by Fellaini. The goal had the effect of freeing United from their shackles, with Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Jesse Lingard and Pogba all arrowing shots over the bar. But Celta served reminders of their threat as the first half drew to a close, Pablo Hernandez, Pione Sisto and John Guidetti working Romero and Daniel Wass heading wide from Sisto's dangerous drilled cross. Celta continued to probe in the second half, with Guidetti thrashing inches wide from Sisto's lay-off and heading off-target from Mallo's cross. Roncaglia's looping 85th-minute header set the scene for a nerve-wracking finale, but despite losing Bailly, United held on.

Ajax, meanwhile, looked to have killed their tie against Lyon following their 4-1 win in last week's home leg when Kasper Dolberg gave them a 27th-minute lead. But a quick-fire double right at the end of the first period from Alexandre Lacazette—the first from the penalty spot—gave the French side hope. Substitute Rachid Ghezzal's heavily deflected header nine minutes from time made it 3-1 on the night and Dutch international Nick Viergever's sending-off gave Lyon extra impetus. — AFP